# TELOS

**Number 50** **Winter 1981-82**

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OF INTELLECTUALS IN THE 1980S

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## a quarterly journal of radical thought

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# INTRODUCTION

With the publication of its 50th issue, *Telos* enters its 15th year of publication in a socio-political context considerably different from the one of May 1968, when the first issue appeared. During this time the journal's focus, as well as its general theoretical framework, has undergone considerable change. It is thus appropriate to briefly retrace the contours of such a development and indicate when and why the shifts took place, along with the various problems encountered in continuing to publish this type of journal during a period of rapidly fading Left politics, theoretical retrenchment, and rising anti-intellectualism. Unaffiliated with any larger group, party or institution, *Telos* remains entirely a project of its editors and contributors. As such, it shares the predicament of the small entrepreneur in the age of monopolies. In defending its autonomy, it confronts a knowledge industry whose products are trivialized and automated inside the academy and commodified by the publishing industry outside of it. Yet, it survives and thrives not just as the stubborn refusal of its producers to capitulate to "business as usual," but because of a growing international circulation that is not reflected by the impact the journal has had on the American Left or its few remaining intellectuals. Fekete's short history, originally written for a conference on the few lingering institutions of criticisms, discusses some of these problems and articulates the present situation of the journal.

Since the journal's pluralism makes it difficult to picture the general theoretical configuration underlying the various positions articulated in it, it was decided to have a symposium on the role of intellectuals in the 1980s to draw out some of these views as well as their implications. Organized, edited and directed by David Gross, this symposium turned out to be both more extensive than originally envisioned as well as more revealing. Although it is easy to separate, on the basis of their responses, those authors who have tenure from those who do not, there is no such clear indication concerning the intellectual's role in the 1980s other than some confidence in what is now being done or, on the whole, a defense of independent radical thought from the ever-present threat of conformism, capitulation and apathy.

This issue also broadens the discussion begun in the special section on Poland that appeared in issue 47 by evaluating the impact and contribution of the Polish developments before the recent imposition of martial law. In continuing his analysis of emancipatory trends and possibilities within authoritarian socialist societies, Arato retraces the events that shaped the trajectory of Solidarity from a trade union to an all-encompassing social movement and eventually its demise. Challenging both opportunistic liberal interpretations to the effect that Solidarity went "too far," and their Marxist counterpart to the effect that it did not go "far enough," Arato defends Solidarity's general strategy and emphasizes its irreversible achievements. In so doing, he severely chides the Western European peace movement's lukewarm, nationalistic and opportunistic non-response to the imposition of martial law which unwittingly feeds into the logic of Polish repression.

An equally negative overall evaluation of the Western European peace movement emerges in the analysis of the socio-economic roots of the new arms race. Contrary to both Left and Right conventional wisdom, the sources of the present problem are not solely a result of the U.S.' quixotic effort to relaunch the old-fashioned imperialist strategy buried once and for all with Vietnam, or the U.S.S.R.'s expansionistic ambitions, but primarily a function of both systems' inability to rationalize their respective socio-economic relations. The new arms race constitutes the easy way out for both — but with potentially catastrophic consequences as well as costly and only temporary results. Within such a framework, the peace movements in Western Europe do not significantly reduce the international balance of terror by restricting missiles with nuclear warheads behind the Urals or in fleets of sumbarines roaming the oceans, but effectively support the nationalistic interests of a Europe desperately seeking to become an equal third partner in the present configuration of world power and emerging international division of labor. While disarmament is indeed a laudable goal, its

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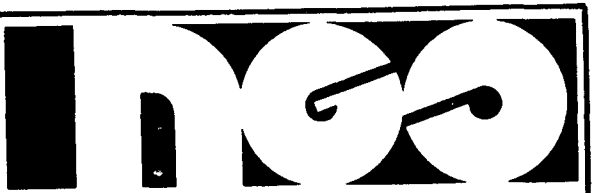
collusion with both nationalistic interests on the one hand and acquiescence or indirect collaboration with the Polish repression on the other is something that should not go unnoticed.

In view of the present economic crisis and the potentially disastrous solutions proposed by the current administration, it is crucial to re-examine whether there are today viable options to state intervention in Western economies. Minsky argues that there are not: Keynesianism thus remains the best option for effectively running Western advanced industrial societies. One of the main reasons for this has to do with the massive social reorganizations needed even to entertain alternatives. This raises the further question of what socio-economic conditions must be met before state interventionism can be seen as reversible. A related question concerns the "end of the individual" — a question which, as Whitebook shows, has prompted an ambiguous response among the Left. Yet, if the individual is dead, there is absolutely no hope of discussing politics as usual or to even entertain any notion of insurgency. Advanced capitalism may well have destroyed their very possibility. Thus, the analysis should focus on the mechanisms that have made this possible and strategies for their elimination. Gross' discussion of the spatialization of time in modern culture focuses precisely on one such mechanism and indicates the extent of its devastating impact.

In continuing one of the journal's constant themes, i.e., the re-evaluation of critical theory, Pütz and Söllner examine, respectively, the influence of Nietzsche and Franz Neumann. Also in this issue, Zerzan and Luke debate the meaning of new workers' "resistance," and Papke, Manion and Visor report on the tribulations of women's studies in coming to grips with the thorny issue of racism. The issue ends with reviews of works on Wittfogel, recent theories of intellectuals and bureaucracy, among other issues, by Antonio, Gandy, Ehrlich, Rundell and Webel.

*Paul Piccone*

new german critique



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# THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC ROOTS OF RE-ARMAMENT

## by Paul Piccone and Victor Zaslavsky

At a time when defense spending is increasing almost everywhere, debates have tended to focus either on the Russian expansionist plans, the relaunching of traditional imperialism by the United States, or the possibility of nuclear confrontation in Western Europe. What has been overlooked is that the changing configuration of international socio-economic relations has made most standard interpretations — both Left as well as Right-wing inspired — hopelessly obsolete. Without implying the old Marxist claim of the priority of economics over all other dimensions, it is clear that a socio-economic analysis of present developmental predicaments of the U.S., U.S.S.R., Western Europe and the rest of the world would shed considerable light — both on the actual dangers of the new arms race, as well as on its long-range domestic implications. The following attempts to trace the rough profile of the present state of affairs and its socio-political implications.

*Problems of Soviet Development*

It has been repeatedly pointed out that much of the legitimacy that the Soviet regime has enjoyed and still enjoys with its population is inextricably connected with the modest but steady growth in the standards of living that has been an unquestioned feature of contemporary Soviet society.[1] By and large, the extreme level of depoliticization of the Soviet citizenry which effectively removes the overwhelming majority of the population from any form of decision-making, the geographical stratification which — through a rigidly enforced and highly effective internal passport system[2] — severely restricts the population's movement, the customary shortages and notorious poor quality of consumer goods,and many other annoying features of Soviet everyday life, have been considered acceptable costs and thus parts of a social compromise which has guaranteed social stability — without having to resort to terror[3] — for the past quarter of a century. After all, the insignificant cost

1. The Soviet regime has, by and large, been able to satisfy popular expectations for higher standards of living. The Brezhnev era will probably enter Soviet history as a period of impressive achievement, unequaled in the past, and not likely to be equaled in the foreseeable future. Cf. Seweryn Bialer, *Stalin's Successors. Leadership, Stability, and Change in the Soviet Union* (Cambridge, 1980). For a dissenting view, see Richard Pipes, *International Herald Tribune*, Jan. 25, 1981, where he claims that Soviet living standards are no higher today than in 1913.

2. Cf. Victor Zaslavsky and Yuri Luryi, "The Passport System in the U.S.S.R. and Changes in Soviet Society," *Soviet Union*, 6:2 (1979), pp. 137-153.

3. Mass political terror, the internment of millions in concentration camps and the threat of death sentences belong to the past. This, however, should not be misinterpreted as an abandonment of political terror, which is still one of the bases of the totalitarian system. Over the last few decades practice has shown that the most effective mode of terror is not criminal prosecution, but controlling people's modes of existence (jobs, income, etc.) and administrative measures (reduction of certain rights and advantages). All this creates such a high level of fear that it has the same effect as mass terror. Thus, today the Russian masses consider it possible to

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of housing, food and other basic necessities — whenever available and whatever low quality — guaranteed full employment, and considerable possibilities for social mobility[4] have been seen as social achievements worth the political price required by the regime. Predicated on such a steady rise of living standards, however, the social compromise is now threatening to come undone since the developmental model upon which it was based has practically exhausted itself.

Notwithstanding all the horror associated with Stalinist industrialization, the creation of a large working class out of a sea of peasants,[5] the occasionally artificial bloating of the educated and professional classes[6] to staff a constantly growing — but not necessarily always socially useful — bureaucratic apparatus, and the institutionalization of a sophisticated system of privileges associated with the party apparatus and the military,[7] have in some sense constituted a functional equivalent for the fulfillment of the ideological promises of socialism and communism. It is impossible to explain the stability and legitimacy of the Soviet system independently of this socio-historical context whose main precondition has been the mobilization of immense and previously underutilized human resources. That reservoir,

avoid repression by adapting to the demands of the totalitarian power, avoiding anything it does not like, as well as the people it does not like. Cf. Zdenek Mlynar, "The Rules of the Game: The Soviet Bloc Today," in *The Political Quarterly*, 50:4 (1979), pp. 403-419.

4. See Bialer, *op.cit.*, p. 156: "The rise in the living standard was achieved in part through a channel which, from the point of view of its contribution to stability, is probably the most advantageous to the regime, namely, through social mobility. I am thinking here not only of the regular channels of mobility through higher education but primarily about mobility from rural to urban occupations and from unskilled labor." See also Walter C. Connor, *Socialism, Politics and Equality. Hierarchy and Change in Eastern Europe and the U.S.S.R.* (New York, 1979). Prospects for occupational mobility in the future are still important, since the historical experience of an earlier expansion of mobility opportunities, *and* socialist rhetoric have generated a greater and broader orientation toward mobility than has existed ever before in the socialist states. There is a risk that frustrated aspirations will lead to unrest if opportunities for individual improvement of one's situation decline.

5. The following figures concerning the class structure of Soviet society are provided by Soviet official statistics. Figures are percentages.

| | 1928 | 1939 | 1959 | 1970 | 1978 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| workers | 12.4 | 33.5 | 49.5 | 56.8 | 61.8 |
| employees | 5.2 | 16.7 | 18.8 | 22.7 | 23.1 |
| collective and farmer | 2.9 | 47.2 | 31.4 | 20.5 | 15.1 |
| individual peasants | 74.9 | 2.6 | 0.3 | | |
| bourgeoisie | 4.6 | | | | |

Cf. *Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR v 1979* (Statistika: Moscow, 1980), pp. 8-9.

6. The number of experts employed in the Soviet economy (in millions) are as follows:

| 1928 | 1941 | 1960 | 1970 | 1979 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| .52 | 2.4 | 8.78 | 16.84 | 26.4 |

Cf. *Narodnae Khoziaistvo SSSR v 1979, ibid.*, p. 397. Thus, experts are the most rapidly growing social group of Soviet society. See also M.N. Rutkevich, F.R. Filippov, eds., *Sotsialnaia struktura razvitogo sotsialisticheskogo obshchestva v SSSR* (Nauka: Moscow, 1976), pp. 87-88.

7. See Mervyn Matthews, *Privilege in the Soviet Union. A Study of Elite Life-Styles under Communism* (London, 1978).

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however, has now become practically exhausted,[8] the bureaucracy seems to have already grown beyond any reasonable limit, and the cost of the military apparatus is rapidly reaching prohibitive levels.[9] Thus, the continuation of the present compromise and its concomitant political power structure is possible primarily on the basis of a guarantee of steadily rising living standards achievable only through the introduction of a radical set of reforms or the re-Stalinization of the system.

Most industrialized Western societies confronted such a quandary with the Great Depression when the saturation of existing markets and the completion of the *extensive* phases of industrialization necessitated a restructuring of the productive process by means of capital-intensive technologies, by rationalizing labor relations with the help of the increasingly interventionist state, and by managing a consumerized collective consciousness through the culture industry. *Intensive* development was facilitated by the growth of powerful oligopolistic industries with vast economic resources; labor relations were regulated through legislation enforced by the state bureaucratic apparatus; and the "Americanization" of consciousness was brought about by universal education, the explosion of new mass media such as television and the marketing of a flood of cheaply produced standardized consumer goods. For a radically different system such as the U.S.S.R., a similar strategy is not possible since most of those mechanisms employed in Western countries to successfully carry out the transition have already been deployed by the Stalinist state to bring about the *extensive* development of industrialization. Thus, the new Soviet leadership which will displace the aging Brezhnev regime will be confronted with two fundamental options to guarantee the extension of the present social compromise: either re-Stalinize the system through the reintroduction of the previously de-emphasized terror mechanisms, or introduce technocratic reforms similar to those discussed and

8. The period of *extensive* economic development when high rates of growth were attained through increments of labor in industry has come to an end. Women already represent more than half the labor force. The overall number of female workers not involved in gainful employment because they have preschool children is close to the theoretical minimum. Cf. M. Ya. Sonin, *Razvitie narodonaseleniia. Ekonomicheskii aspekt* (Moscow, 1980), p. 117. Quoted in Murray Yanovitch, *Social and Economic Inequality in the Soviet Union. Six Studies* (White Plains, N.Y., 1977), p. 165. The villages are no longer a reservoir of industrial labor force, "the flow of migrants from the country to the city greatly outpaces the economically justified outflow of the agricultural work force." Cf. B.S. Khorev, ed., *Problemy rasseleniia v SSSR. Sotsalno-demograficheskii analiz seti poselenii i zadachi upravleniia* (Moscow, 1980), p. 34.

9. The Western estimates of Soviet military spending fluctuate within the range of 11 percent and 14 percent of the GNP. Cf. Bialer, *op.cit.*, p. 294. Igor Birman is now completing the first work on the methodology of Soviet military spending calculation. See also Igor Birman, "The Financial Crisis in the USSR," *Soviet Studies,* 32:1 (1980), pp. 84-105; "Ekonomicheskaia situatsia v SSSR," in *Kontinent*, 28 (1981), pp. 259-300; and "Protivorechivje protivorchiia (zametki o Sovetskoi ekonomicheskoi teorii i praktike)," in Valery Chalidze, ed., *SSSR Vnutrennie protivorechiia* (New York, 1981), pp. 9-63. Birman suggests that the burden of the military expenses may be considerably higher than 11-14 percent of the GNP. The CIA estimates, using input-output techniques, claim that the 1975 military requirements, both direct and indirect, accounted for the following shares of output in major branches of Soviet heavy industry: "Energy — one sixth of output, chemicals, one sixth of output, metallurgy, one fifth, machinery and metal-working, one third." Cited in Bialer, *op.cit.*, p. 294.

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even partly implemented in the middle 1960s. Both options, however, entail considerable political risks and hidden costs.

Re-Stalinization is seen as a viable option not only by traditional right-wing analyses, which never took de-Stalinization very seriously, but also by left critics such as Castoriadis, who have come to see the U.S.S.R. as an immense war machine irrevocably moving toward doomsday,[10] or Brus, who considers reforms impossible, thus leaving re-Stalinization as the only viable option.[11] To the extent that they underestimate the logic of internal Soviet dynamics, however, these accounts unwarrantedly hypostasize contingent conditions to cover all recent Soviet history, thus providing a somewhat a-historical analysis whose alarmist results tend to further occlude the actual state of affairs and developing possibilities.

In Castoriadis' account, the Soviet Union is presented as irreversibly split into two qualitatively different societies, the military-industrial complex and all the rest, where one completely dominates and instrumentalizes the other. Furthermore, this total domination is seen as leading to a unilinear expansionistic foreign policy that is traced back for several decades and projected forward to a practically inevitable 1984. While this fundamental split in Soviet society is universally recognized as a key feature of the system, it should not be forgotten that the two sectors are not so mutually impenetrable as they are normally depicted, the relation between the two not as asymmetrical as a simplistic model of military-industrial domination may imply, but much more interdependent[12] and, to the extent that the fundamental social goals have changed from system-building to system-maintenance, internal dynamics also have tended to take on a new meaning.

The split into two societies, which extends even into a geographical stratification of the country into qualitatively different zones describable as closed cities, open cities, and the countryside — and the related passport system — was originally developed because of socio-economic imperatives associated with system-building such as the accelerated development of heavy industry

10. Cf. Cornelius Castoriadis, *Devant la Guerre* (Paris, 1981). Cf. also his "Facing the War," *Telos,* 46 (Winter 1980-81), pp. 43-61.

11. Wlodzimierz Brus, "Political System and Economic Efficiency: The East European Context," *Journal of Comparative Economics,* 4 (1980).

12. So-called "closed enterprises" are increasingly losing their critical rationale — their real or even imaginary connection with military secrets. Closed enterprises are becoming a convenient political instrument to shift rewards and increase upward social mobility for members of certain social and-or territorial groups. Thus, key enterprises, under certain conditions, may be raised to the closed enterprise status by sheer political decision of appreciative authorities. Industrial managers strive for transformation of the enterprises — or at least their parts (workshops) — into closed ones as a way to fight the problem of labor turnover and the lack of manpower. On the other hand, the practice of declassifying former closed enterprises, which, for some reasons, have lost their strategic or political significance, is also widespread. There are obvious differences between, e.g., closed enterprises employing advanced technology which work fully or partly for military or space industries, and traditionally backward textile or food processing enterprises. There are, however, no grounds to compartmentalize Soviet industry, as Castoriadis has done, into two completely separated sectors — highly efficient closed enterprises and backward, inefficient open ones.

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and of an efficient military machine. With the shift from the Stalinist to the neo-Stalinist state, the function of this division changed, becoming increasingly problematic. In a context where both heavy industry as well as the military are already much stronger than would be normally necessary, the socio-economic stratification that produced both has now become a major means of legitimation for the system, but one that cannot be retained unaltered much longer.[13]

Inextricably connected with the planning flexibilities afforded a command economy, the creation of closed cities devoted to privileged industrial production and bureaucratic administration was based primarily on a model of extensive economic development made possible by massive injections of previously rural labor power and legitimized not only by the goal of building socialism or the protection of the country from foreign threats, but also by the rapid and widespread social mobility that accompanied it. The development of a vast bureaucratic apparatus required the constitution of a middle-class previously non-existent and drawn primarily from a working class that was itself only one generation removed from the peasantry. With the evaporation of socialism as a goal because of its alleged realization and the exhaustion of the previously almost unlimited reserves of human resources, it is no longer possible, on the basis of the present system, to either guarantee the slow but steady improvement of living standards or to retain the earlier avenues, the rapid social mobility. The bureaucratic apparatus has already been bloated beyond reasonable limits in order to artificially uphold these avenues of social mobility, and demographic data clearly show that the countryside has been depleted of its surplus human resources. Furthermore, to the extent that the military-industrial complex only pursues production for its own sake, the resulting scarcity of acceptable consumer products and agricultural goods intensifies an already serious lack of material incentives in a context where collective depoliticization has left them as the only viable incentives for both major sectors of society.

Brezhnev's neo-Stalinist model has essentially refined and rationalized the earlier Stalinist model by eliminating overt physical terror, institutionalizing previously temporary and accidental measures such as restrictions on internal geographical mobility and "freezing" of nationality[14] and existing internal political and power relations. At the same time, however, it has also exhausted its possibilities. Its major mechanisms can no longer function without major reforms required not to improve it, but to keep it as closely as possible to what it is now. Of course, it is conceivable that terror may be re-introduced to coerce the population to work out of no other incentive than

13. As the Medvedevs write: "Over a long period of its development, the Soviet economy has depended on freedom of movement being seriously restricted and so it is hardly surprising that this has become a condition of its normal functioning. In other words, specific economic factors do now exist that serve to consolidate and perpetuate restrictions on freedom of movement." Cf. R.A. Medvedev and Z.A. Medvedev, *Krushchev, The Years in Power* (New York, 1976), p. 213.

14. See Victor Zaslavsky, "The Ethnic Question in the U.S.S.R.," in *Telos*, 45 (Fall 1980), pp. 45-76.

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physical survival. Such a shift, however, would not only be extremely costly for the population and the system as a whole, but it would impose practically unacceptable risks on the ruling political elite. The elite's very existence would be threatened not only by the population at large, but also by competing factions within the power elite itself — as was the case with the mass purges in the 1930s.[15] No longer ideologically mesmerized by the attainable ideal of socialism, nor economically bought off by rapid social mobility or unavailable consumer goods and services, the population is not likely to readily acquiesce to a recycling of Stalinism. The traditional social compromise would simply break down.

For these reasons and others, Castoriadis' scenario turns out to be unrealistic: in order to stay even roughly the same, the system will have to reform extensively. In this respect, Brus' argument for a slow, re-Stalinization predicated on the impossibility of reforming the system is more tenable. Yet it remains unclear why, in the face of grave threats, the political apparatus will not consider the less costly of the two equally unappealing alternatives and yield some of its power rather than risk much higher costs. As Amelrik has pointed out, "In order to remain in power, the regime must change and evolve, but in order to preserve itself, everything must remain unchanged."[16]

The difficulty with reforming the economy by de-emphasizing heavy industry, intensifying production and improving the quality of consumer goods and services and eliminating the more immediately problematic features of the repressive apparatus, e.g., the passport system and closed cities and industries, became all too obvious in the late 1960s, when such reforms were timidly introduced but suddenly stopped in 1968 with the invasion of Czechoslovakia. First of all, by providing enterprises with some relative autonomy the system suddenly confronted the ghost of unemployment resulting from the rationalization of work; secondly, the all-pervasiveness of the plan was threatened since control of investments and of the disposition of the wage-fund tended to become increasingly technical prerogatives of the enterprises, and thus outside the central planning process; thirdly, the vast bureaucratic apparatus deployed to develop, supervise and regulate the plan was rapidly turning out to be redundant and irrelevant; and fourthly — and most importantly — the net effect of these reforms meant drastic decline of power for the party elite as well as a reconstitution of independently functioning market mechanisms and the potential reconstitution of an independent civil society.[17]

After 1968, the Brezhnev regime judged these costs unacceptable and fell back on the neo-Stalinist model whose deficiencies have become all too obvious in the 1980s after a full decade of decline in productivity and agricultural failures. Thus, in many respects, the phenomenon of Jewish

15. See Alvin W. Gouldner, "Stalinism: A Study of Internal Colonialism," *Telos*, 34 (Winter 1977-1978), pp. 5-48.

16. Cf. Andrei Amalrik, *Will the Soviet Union Survive 1984?* (New York, 1970), p. 22.

17. Cf. "Automation and Incentives as Solutions for Tight Labor Market," *Soviet World Outlook*, 6:9 (September 1981), pp. 6-7.

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emigration during this decade is not associated primarily with the sudden resurgence of some sense of ethnic identity or the intensification of persecution of minorities, but is inextricably connected to the necessary trimming of the professional classes, where for historical reasons Jews happen to have located, and thus the retention of otherwise rapidly declining social mobility options.[18] Similarly, the attempts to reform agriculture not by reconstructing the present highly exploitative and consequently notoriously inefficient collective farms, but by stimulating black-market production in the officially sanctioned but tightly controlled private plots, results not only in a double exploitation of peasants but also generates considerable ethnic friction. Thus, farmers are forced to work both in collective farms whose product is almost entirely expropriated by the state with no compensation, and on private plots, whose products are sold privately for market prices.[19] While this officially stimulated growth of the black market does alleviate some severe shortages, it leads to an otherwise incomprehensible situation where living standards in a Soviet Union politically dominated by Russian nationals are significantly higher in the Southern and Central Asian republics than in Russia itself. The ethnic conflicts generated by this paradoxical state of affairs constitute a major time bomb whose explosive consequences can be both disintegrating and legitimating — but certainly destabilizing.

At any rate, terror on a mass scale is unlikely to be reintroduced. First of all, it is much more difficult to run an advanced technology and economy today by using terror than it was during the Stalinist period of system building. A systematic use of terror destroys or impairs human will to work productively. Secondly, there is always an obvious threat that a mass-scale terror machine will get out of hand (as happened in the last years of Stalinism) and start destroying its masters. Thirdly, and the most important point: mass-scale terror can be used when the labor resources are plentiful. When labor force was in abundance (and first-generation workers were easily replaceable) fear disciplined workers and served as an important means for raising labor productivity. During a demographic crisis and tremendous lack of manpower, terror cannot be effectively used (workers are simply too valuable to destroy a noticeable percentage of them in concentration camps). In all likelihood, the neo-Stalinist leadership will aim at severely curtailing workers' rights to quit jobs at will rather than introduce a large-scale terror.[20]

18. Cf. Victor Zaslavsky and Robert Brym, *Via the "Jewish Route:" Soviet Emigration in the 1970s* (forthcoming).

19. Cf. Leo Timoseef, "Black Market Technology and the Peasants' Art of Starving," in *Grani*, 120 (1981), pp. 41-160. English translation forthcoming in *Telos*.

20. The first attack on the workers' right to voluntary unemployment was launched by the Brezhnev leadership immediately after the Afghanistan invasion (December 1979). In January 1980 the Central Committee and Council of Ministers' resolution "On the Further Strengthening of Labor Discipline and Reduction of Turnover in the National Economy" was published, which put some obstacles to changing jobs. The timing of the publication was no accident. It was published "at that time, because in the atmosphere of the threat of war created by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, it attracted less attention and caused less grumbling among the workers." Cf. Yuri Luryi, "The Scientific-Technical Revolution and Soviet Labor Legislation," in G.B. Smith, P.B. Maggs, G. Ginsburg, eds., *Soviet and East European Law and the Scientific-Technical Revolution* (New York, 1981), p. 231.

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Terror will be the last resort in the case of mass disobedience (as in Poland).

Trying to solve the dilemma of stability and change, the Brezhnev regime has placed an overwhelming emphasis on stability. It evolved slowly through perfecting the old Stalinist myth while avoiding any significant economic or political reforms. Even when the Brezhnev leadership confronts the need for a certain concession it tries hard, at the first chance, to take it back or neutralize it. The fate of two major internal innovations of the 1970s is emblematic: the permission given to Jews and trouble-makers in various other categories to emigrate can be regarded as the greatest change in official policy during the Brezhnev regime.[21] Soviet authorities were forced to lift the 50-year-old ban on emigration mainly because of the organized pressure of nationalist groups among Soviet Jewry whose militants found a great deal of support in the West. Soviet authorities, however, started using emigration as a safety valve to rid society of dissidents and social liabilities. Obviously, the level of power and resource concentration in the hand of the present Soviet rulers is such that they can often, with time, accommodate to or even profit from an originally unfavorable situation. Zinoviev has even noticed that "today Soviet emigration appears a deliberate and premeditated operation on the part of Soviet authorities, designed primarily for their benefit as well as for that of certain groups within the Soviet Union."[22] However, when, during the first decade of emigration, more than a quarter of a million people left the Soviet Union, destabilizing effects became more pronounced. Emigration not only saved the lives of many dissidents who would have otherwise perished in labor camps. It also allowed Soviet society to open up somewhat, it introduced the emigration experience to people who for generations were cut off from the outside world and produced an important connecting channel between the West and the Soviet population.[23] The constant growth of the emigration flow in the end of the 1970s demonstrated that Soviet society lost again in its competition with the West concerning standards of living. Under such conditions, the Soviet leadership took the first steps to drastically reduce emigration through administrative measures.

The second major change in the Brezhnev internal policy is a new attitude toward private plots in agriculture. Previously, Soviet propaganda characterized private plots as "distracting from work in the socialized economy, undermining labor discipline and prompting speculation."[24] In light of the sorry predicament and repeated failures of Soviet agriculture, in the end of the 1970s the Brezhnev leadership suddenly changed its stand on private plots promising support and removing some restrictions. To understand how unexpected and drastic this change is, consider a 1973

21. Peter Reddaway, "Policy towards Dissent since Khrushchev," in T.H. Rigby, Archie Brown and Peter Reddaway, eds., *Authority, Power and Policy in the U.S.S.R. Essays Dedicated to Leonard Shapiro* (London, 1980), pp. 158-192.

22. Alexander Zinoviev, "O Kommunizme, o Zapade i o sebe," *Vremya i my,* 46 (1979), p. 144.

23. As one of the KGB chiefs has recently admitted, "emigration intentions are growing and not only among the Jewish, German and Armenian groups." Cf. S. Tsvigun, "O proiskakh imperialisticheskikh razvedok," in *Kommunist,* 14 (1981), p. 98.

24. Cf. *Pravda Ukrainy,* May 25, 1964.

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sociological study in which middle-level Siberian bureaucrats and managers were asked: "What would happen to private plots in 10 to 15 years?" Twelve percent answered that they would be the same, 74 percent said they would be reduced and change in character, and 12 percent felt they would die out. No one suggested that private plots would grow and develop.[25] Private plots, where peasants work their second shifts after obligatory shifts on state farms, and where the lack of mechanization is compensated by the labor of the old and of school children, are very unproductive (even if labor productivity there is higher than at collective farms). This raises peasants' exploitation to an extreme. Soviet peasants, especially youth, are now much more reluctant to take on this burden.[26] The ever deteriorating performance of the Soviet economy and the failure of all major reforms and innovations in the 1970s demonstrate that the course of Brezhnev leadership — maintaining the status quo and stability without structural changes — is practically exhausted and cannot be a viable policy for the 1980s.

Thus, once again, unless terror is introduced on a much larger scale than was ever the case even in the worst days of Stalin, the continued lack of material incentives and the greatly diminished possibilities for social mobility necessitate serious technocratic reforms, which, however, cannot be allowed to threaten too severely the political hegemony of the central party-state elite. This means that, with the impending changing of the guard because of the aging of the Brezhnev leadership, reforms of some sort will in all likelihood have to be introduced. While it is impossible to predict which measures will be introduced, in what way and how rapidly, it is fairly clear that they will not be allowed to threaten the existing power relations. This means that a tendentially stagnant economy will be only timidly stimulated by the much needed technocratic reforms with a growing dependence on the West for consumer goods, high technology for the consumer goods industry, and agricultural products. Unlike in the case of Poland and Eastern Europe, however, on the whole the Soviet Union finds itself in a very advantageous international position to enter into such trade relations because of its immense natural resources and their rapidly rising prices. Thus, the United States and the Soviet Union tend to develop *complementary* economic systems that spell rapprochement rather than confrontation for the years to come.

*Problems of American Development*

A parallel analysis of the socio-economic dynamics of the United States reveals a similar dependence of foreign policy on internal problems of development. While in the Soviet Union the massive growth of the military is not primarily or only the result of an inherently aggressive foreign posture but mainly the embarrassing consequence of the system's inability to rationalize and modernize its obsolescent system-building developmental model, in the United States the re-armament strategy is the traditional Republican counterpart to the Democrats' vague re-industrialization project. Unable to

25. P.V. Ryvkina, *Obraz zhizni selskogo naseleniia* (Novosibirsk, 1979), p. 186

26. As a Siberian sociologist put it, "the private plots are one of the strongest factors driving the youth out of the villages." Cf. Ryvkina, *op.cit.*, p. 185.

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directly intervene in economic relations to further rationalize the U.S. economy in order to effectively confront a new international economic order, the Republican administration seeks to indirectly bring about the same results by stimulating the economy in the only way it finds acceptable: through defense spending. Independently of the low possibilities of success of such a strategy, it promotes an ideologically acceptable answer at a politically extremely advantageous cost, i.e., by allowing the Reagan administration to reward the bulk of his supporters by shifting state redistribution priorities and altering taxation policies.

Because of successful economic policies mostly in Western Europe and Japan, in the early 1970s the United States was faced with a declining competitive industrial sector and a weak international posture in the aftermath of the Vietnam fiasco. The international economic weakness was readily remedied by cleverly manipulating the two oil crises to inflict much higher costs on Western Europe and Japan, while the decline of the competitive industrial sector (i.e., steel, automobile, textiles, shoes, etc.) remained unsolved. One of the main issues at stake in the 1980 elections was precisely the direction of the American economy in the years ahead and the government's policy towards the beleaguered internationally competitive sector of the economy. Built on the traditional coalition of organized labor, minorities and urban political machines tied inextricably to local economic interests, the Democratic Party could propose solutions to the problem only in terms of intensifying the already bankrupt policy of direct bureaucratic intervention resulting in high rates of inflation and not substantially reducing unemployment. Committed to a more restricted role for government, the Republican's proposal simply promised a facilitation of industrial and commercial activities by lessening government regulations and thus reducing costs while allowing the market to bring about a new economically healthy equilibrium.

The inadequacy of the de-bureaucratizing strategy and of the redistribution through taxation policy to stimulate re-industrialization or the re-establishment of an American international economic hegemony was then seen remediable through massive defense spendings. This could be readily justified in terms of Soviet military might, recent international crises such as Iran and Afghanistan, and, more importantly, the need to rationalize the U.S. military forces suffering not so much in terms of inadequate available armaments but poor internal organization. Without engaging in any extensive discussion of the U.S. military apparatus, it is clear that its rationalization cannot come about through massive and expensive new weapon systems but only through an internal restructuring and redirecting of its potential objectives. That the Reagan administration is thus seeking to cure a disease which does not exist reflects the fact that the patient may be elsewhere: it is not primarly the military but the economy. And the objective is not just to confront the Soviet Union's military might, but to retool the most advanced sector of the U.S. industrial system so to be able to fully exploit the opportunities offered by the sluggish and only partially reformed economies of

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the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and Third World. Unable to rationalize effectively because of its potential political risks, the U.S.S.R. economy is likely to be modernized and rationalized, but unevenly, grudgingly and partially so as to develop a growing dependence on Western consumer goods, high technology and agricultural products.

Since in the new international division of labor the U.S. cannot effectively compete with the rest of Western industrial societies on the level of consumer goods, its best options are in the monopoly sectors and agriculture. By leading the West into a major military modernization and by thus retaining virtual exclusive hold on the most advanced and expensive military technology, the United States can place its monopoly sector in an internationally privileged position which could restore its threatened world hegemony. With defense industries and defense-related research as its foundation, the United States can impose a new international division of labor whereby it dominates the monopoly sector, Western Europe and Japan control the consumer goods or competitive sector, and the Third World ends up relegated largely to providing raw materials and labor power. Thus, the indirect massive subsidies provided to this monopoly sector by the new defense spendings tend to prepare it for the economic tasks ahead. The re-militarization strategy is, in this sense, at least partially a facade for a much more sound and long-range economic rationalization. The objective is not so much to prepare for a final confrontation with the Soviet Union but for eventually a more effective trade relation. While the opening to China was a geo-political strategic success, an economy that has yet to undergo the first industrial revolution through *extensive* development does not provide a fraction of the markets available in one that is desperately attempting to enter the second *intensive* phase of industrial development without paying the related political costs. Thus, the now discredited détente is only in political deep-freeze pending the rationalization of the U.S. economy with respect to the rest of the Western nations and the coming reforms in the Soviet Union.

In this sense, the Reagan policies not only turn out to be essentially continuous with those of Carter, but because of the nature of its support, they are able to overcome a political obstacle that the previous Democratic administration could not.[27] Carter became president in 1976 by attacking the traditional welfare-state policies that at the time had been discredited by the Vietnam failure, Watergate, and widespread exasperation with an increasingly irrational bureaucratic state machinery. With the reluctant backing of the traditional Democratic Party machinery, which could not defect to Ford the way a large part of it had done when McGovern challenged Nixon in 1972, Carter employed the very same anti-statist rhetoric that had been the bread and butter of right-wing Republicans seeking a return to a pre-1929 market economy. Thus, Carter was able to present himself as both a defender of traditional values, with his Baptist and Southern background,

27. Cf. Alan Wolfe, *America's Impasse: The Rise and Fall of the Politics of Growth* (New York, 1981). Wolfe argues for a continuity in U.S. policy going as far back as the Truman administration.

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and as a progressive when compared to his Republican counterpart. Carter's election was no historical accident. He succeeded largely because he seemed to propose an alternative to traditional politics at a time when they seemed so corrupt, inefficient and worn out as to warrant replacement. It meant the end of a well-defined phase of capitalist reconstruction successfully managed by a large federal bureaucracy whose main tools of social manipulation were a newly developed culture industry and the restructuration of the production process.

It was the culture industry, in fact, that had paved the way for the consumerization of American collective consciousness. Its successful privatizing, depoliticizing and homogenizing of individuality allowed the new mass-production methods to commodify values while generating huge profits and paying the relatively high wages necessary to purchase the newly packaged American way of life. It worked well — but at the price of destroying the very conditions that made it possible. The culture industry's erosion of individuality tended to eliminate that minimal independent public sphere without which the bureaucracy becomes an end-in-itself and thus fails in its instrumental regulatory function and the technological revolution rapidly exhausted the cheap energy sources necessary for an uninterrupted growth. The culture industry successfully eliminated or integrated every type of internal opposition. Thus, it also undermined both the system's ability to come up with alternatives to the status quo as well as the means to regulate it, since the privatized and alienated populace is no longer able to organize itself politically to constitute a public sphere which can provide the much needed internal criticism.[28] This precipitated a rationality crisis, at least to the extent that the bureaucracy was no longer provided with externally reached and politically determined goals. It thus became its own goal and became derelict in its instrumental functions (hence, Watergate and the well-known abuses of regulatory agencies). Also, in destroying whatever remnant there was of a public sphere, it reduced the political process to popularity contests at the level of public appearances and to a well-orchestrated corporativist interplay of "interest groups" on the level of policy determination.

The redesigning of the production process likewise discouraged any type of challenge to capitalist control by fragmenting functions, sharply separating thinking from doing, and generally preventing those involved in it from ever understanding the totality of the labor process. Combined with the higher wages made possible by a rapidly expanding economy (as a result of the shift from labor-intensive to capital-intensive technologies), this created a pacified populace but also the basis of the subsequent crisis.

1968 meant the exhaustion of this two-pronged strategy of capitalist reconstruction. Greater reliance on non-renewable fuels necessary for rapidly expanding capital- and energy-intensive industries laid the groundwork for the present projected shortages of cheap energy, and the coming economic

28. For a more elaborate discussion of these mechanisms, see Paul Piccone, "The Crisis of One-Dimensionality," *Telos*, 35 (Spring 1978), pp. 43-54, and Tim Luke, "Culture and Politics in the Age of Artificial Negativity," *ibid.*, pp. 65-72.

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ruptures. The bureaucracy's inability to contain this crisis within acceptable limits gave rise to a new kind of anti-bureaucratic populism, couched occasionally in traditional right-wing rhetoric seeking a return to a long-gone entrepreneurial capitalism. Carter's populism successfully articulated these problems in a way that was politically acceptable to a depoliticized citizenry unable to understand the issues but longing to return to the rapidly disappearing traditional values. It worked well the first time around, but collapsed in 1980 when, in order to keep the Democratic Party together, Carter had to accept lock, stock and barrel the Kennedy program at the last moment. This left him vulnerable on the right and paved the way for the Reagan victory.

Carter's success had been problematic from the very beginning since it represented socio-economic interests at odds with the traditional Democratic Party political base. The New Deal coalition that had dominated the party for more than 30 years was inextricably connected with that internationally competitive wing of American capitalism in the process of being displaced in its hegemonic role by the high-technology monopoly sector. Carter's policies represented the interests of this latter sector and, consequently, were much more continuous with Reagan's outlook than with his own party. Far from being a monolithic whole, American capitalism had developed a myriad of sectors with one major division being most important: that between the competitive and the monopoly sectors. While the competitive sector (steel, automobile, garments, etc.) was running into increasingly fierce international challenges, the monopoly sectors (computers, aircraft, and high technology in general) was thriving. Furthermore, while the competitive sector was still besieged by all the problems that the strategy of capitalist reconstruction from the New Deal on had sought to solve, the monopoly sector (largely composed of newer industries) had no such problems. Given its privileged state, it had few if any labor problems, it produced little pollution, and it was in no way challenged by traditional leftist claims: internal democratization only led to higher efficiency, profit-sharing to greater legitimation, and socialism ceased to be an alternative since it amounted at best to the meaningless displacement of owners by party officials. It was this sector also that responded positively to Carter's call for the anti-welfare state, de-bureaucratization, and the re-creation of a public sphere. From this sector's viewpoint, the competitive sector at home might as well be phased out and relocated abroad in a new international division of labor. The exporting of most of the competitive sector, of course, coincides with the change in strategy of capitalist reconstruction that Carter seemed to promise.

Carter's victory thus seemed to usher in a new phase of American capitalism and at the beginning of his presidency there were indications he might succeed. Consider his human rights policy. Although it immediately caused embarrassment in foreign policy among traditional right-wing dictatorships historically allied with the United States, it dealt heavy ideological blows to most Eastern bloc socialist societies and produced an

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unprecedented wave of prestige and international influence for the United States. In retrospect, had Carter been firm on this policy and applied heavy pressure on brutal dictatorships such as that of the shah in Iran and Somoza in Nicaragua, revolutions in both countries likely would have been averted by spurring the repressive regimes to adopt more moderate and self-legitimizing forms of government. But Carter failed because, as it turned out, he had most of the Democratic Party against him. Congress successfully checkmated both his domestic and his foreign policies to the point that, in order to retain any type of political coherence, he had to accept the program of the Kennedy wing and thus capitulate ideologically. Reagan's success was partly due to his inheriting the early Carter ideology while operating in a Republican Party committed to the same goals. Unlike the U.S.S.R., where growing militarization is connected with the failure to modernize the socio-economic system, in the U.S. it is the opposite: militarism is the functional equivalent of an effective economic rationalization politically difficult to implement otherwise.

*Problems of Development*

Notwithstanding their fundamentally different systems, both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. implicitly accept a model of development that relies heavily on a growing consumerism, a continuing depoliticization of the populace, and the exploding employment of energy-intensive technologies. Consumerism and depoliticization engender a collective passivity that discourages the rise of that *homo faber* projected by whole generations of radical thinkers. But this uninterrupted extension of the rule of dead labor over live — effectively mediated by technocratic and bureaucratic institutions — calls for an almost unlimited availability of cheap energy sources. While non-renewable energy may be in abundant supply now and for the immediate future, it is clear that it will soon have to be replaced by other types. It is for this reason that both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. are irreversibly committed to nuclear development. Without it, the socio-economic glue holding both systems together would melt away, thus undoing the existing social compromises. In this sense, the ecological movement is even more radical than it claims. By challenging the basis of the systems' own reproducibility, the ecological movement poses the question of alternative modes of development more radically than ever before. It is for this reason that issues relating to lifestyle, social relations and the "new men and women" are once again propelled into center stage.

Given this state of affairs, the nationalist character of the German and European peace movement turns out to be unexpectedly even more in conformity with Western European establishment *Realpolitik* than even Arato suspects.[29] By vigorously opposing military escalation, these movements effectively challenge the project for the resurgence of U.S. world hegemony in favor of a Western European refusal to accept a back seat in the new international division of labor.

29. Cf. Andrew Arato, "Poland 1980-81," in this issue of *Telos*.

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# EMPIRE VS. CIVIL SOCIETY: POLAND 1981-82

## by Andrew Arato

*Western Critics of the Polish Opposition*

Support for the Polish democratic movement should have been easy for all those supposedly opposed to the totalitarian status quo in Eastern Europe. All Marxists should have been convinced by the overwhelming working class character of the Polish opposition (one of the rare proletarian revolutions in history). Remnants of the libertarian New Left should have seen its stress on an alternative public sphere and on direct democracy as one of the few authentic continuations of their own efforts. New Western social movements should have been very sympathetic to the rebuilding of whole domains of autonomy and the democratic utilization of counter-expertise.[1] Unfortunately, such has not been the case.

Sustained responses by all these tendencies after Dec. 13 could have made some difference in Poland — especially if it called for political and economic sanctions by Western governments as requested by every important member of Solidarity in the West (and now by Bujak, the organization's senior underground leader). How much of a difference it would have made is difficult to say because, with the exception of France and Italy, public response has been relatively negligible. Most European governments have limited themselves to anything from moral outrage (France) to a slightly veiled apology for the lesser of two supposed evils (West Germany). In particular, the peace movement that a few months earlier was able to mobilize hundreds of thousands of people in several countries, managed to respond to the Polish military *coup* with little more than confusion and equivocation.[2] The remarkable convergence of the attitude of the most extensive social movement in Western Europe with what is assumed (in part mistakenly) to be the short and long-term interests of European banking and industrial interests sealed the fate of a serious European response without which limited American economic sanctions cannot have much force.

1. Many things should have made this first independent working class organization in sovietized Eastern Europe an inspiring model and a potential partner: to pacifists, the remarkably disciplined, non-violent character of Solidarity; to left liberals, its stress on civil and political rights; to Social Democrats, its insistence on reform instead of revolution in the sense of the violent overthrow of the existing state; to democratic socialists, its general openness and experimental attitude toward new forms of a self-managed socialist economy.

2. The naiveté towards the Soviet Union of all advocates of unilateral disarmament was clear even before the Polish crisis. When faced with the argument that in the East no corresponding pressure could be exerted on the state, and in particular on its military-industrial arm, people such as Kaldor, Thompson, and Eppler emphasized the possibility of independent pressure represented by Solidarity. This could not have been completely honest because the movement in Poland had clearly renounced raising any issues pertaining to the military framework to which the country belongs. At any rate, the defeat of Solidarity has not only *not* led to revisions of this argument, but, on the contrary, in many cases a strategy of at least partially blaming the victim allows several spokesmen for the peace movement to maintain faith in pressure groups in the Soviet Union and East Europe equally solicitous of the results of Yalta (not Helsinki, to be sure) and of the economic interests involved in disarmament.

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Without overestimating the strength of various Left groups and social movements, the point is clear: the Eastern European opposition can count on Left opinion only in those few European countries where, for important political and intellectual reasons, mass socialist and-or communist parties had to totally distance themselves from the Soviet model. This situation is all the more disastrous because the fate of Western Europe also hangs in the balance.

The positions of many spokesmen for a peace opinion in particular converge with the logic of the Polish repression. Accordingly, what was wrong with the Polish oppisition, what provoked its suppression, and what cancels the solidarity of many Western political activists with Solidarity is supposedly the fact that, given geography and the realities of communist power (thus both the interests of the internal peace of Poland and external peace), *Solidarity went too far*. Had the organization followed "a reasonable middle course,"[3] had it been "willing to pause as recently as a month or two ago — to rest a while on its laurels and to give time for Moscow to satisfy itself that freedom in Poland did not mean the immediate collapse of the heavens — it would already have had to its credit a historic achievement.... But this of course was not the road that Solidarity, or part of Solidarity, took."[4]

What would *not* have been *too far?* Today's Polish regime, or rather its so-called reformers, have a simple answer: Solidarity should have remained a trade union and stayed out of politics altogether, as Western unions do.[5] Those in the West who accept this account should realize what everyone in Poland knows, that under political, legal and cultural conditions of an unreformed Soviet-type society, this approach would have meant co-option, integration and assimilation. Many Western Marxists have criticized the Polish

3. See Rudolf Augstein's editorial in *Der Spiegel*, Dec. 21, 1981.

4. George Kennan on the Op-Ed page of *The New York Times*, Jan. 5, 1982. Kennan mentions membership in the Warsaw Pact and the "retention of a 'Socialist' (whatever that means) form of government" as two limits that could not be challenged. Of course, the first was never challenged, and Kennan's uncertainty regarding the meaning of the second indicates that it could not serve as a clearly defined limit. After all, from the Soviet viewpoint, an independent trade union already challenged a "socialist form of government." On the other hand, Solidarity always officially accepted "the leading role of the party." After the Gdansk agreements, however, it considered its meaning subject to further negotiations and clarifications that never took place. In any case, till the very last day, and then under extreme provocation, Solidarity made no deliberate move to overthrow or even to hasten the decomposition of the communist party. At any rate, Kennan's two limits amount essentially to a restatement of the program of the new evolutionism that Solidarity inherited from KOR and accepted up to the very last days. See Adam Michnik, "What We Want and What We Can Do," *Telos*, 47 (Spring 1981), pp. 66-77. Kennan also speaks of the disastrous decline of Poland's "economic and financial position" as a result of the "combination of a semi-paralyzed Communist government and a Solidarity well set up to obstruct this government, but in no way prepared to replace it." Presumably, this does not mean that Solidarity should have tried to resolve the social and economic paralysis by moving to replace the existing government. The Russians, about whose sensibilities he is so solicitous, would not have liked that at all. What he is saying is that Solidarity's aims, laudable in principle, could in Poland only lead to a stalemate that it was in almost everyone's interest to end. Only the state's repressive action, however, could do this.

5. In fact, the regime demanded two contradictory things from Solidarity: it did not want it to be political, yet it was urged to take responsibility for the government's policies. Brus, "Die Revolution in Polen," in Wlodzimierz Brus *et al., Polen — Symptome und Ursachen der polnischen Krise* (Hamburg, 1981).

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opposition precisely on the basis of such a potential outcome. For them, *Solidarity did not go far enough.* To their credit, these sectarians (whose political weight is, of course, insignificant) support Solidarity in its defeat. Unfortunately, this support is always followed by an irrelevant "I told you so," which, although made plausible now by the movement's defeat, loses sight of some of Solidarity's greatest achievements. If the Polish opposition must be defended in the face of the distanced attitude of pacifists, social democrats and left liberals, their achievements must similarly be rescued from the sectarian Left's "critical support."

This "critical support" was already formulated when Solidarity was still thriving — hence the unabashed "told you so" today. Predictably, orthodox Marxists supported the movement's working class character, but found its Catholicism, nationalism, civil libertarianism and interest in political democracy incompatible with inherited dogma. The last two sins at least, and again predictably, were blamed on the intellectuals' association with the movement — especially the KOR representatives. These intellectuals committed a great offense: they did not have the same theoretical assessment of the situation and the same model of social emancipation as the sectarian Left. Of course, the attack on intellectuals, with its not-so-hidden ouvrierist demagogy, corresponds to the regime's own attack on the same intellectuals dubbed variously as "anti-socialist elements" and "Zionists," with one important difference: the Western sectarians argue that it was because of intellectuals that the movement did not go far enough. [6]

What would have been *far enough?* According to Ticktin, the Polish movement has more or less become the vehicle for the intellectual's interests whose model of a liberal, parliamentary system based on the restoration of market rationality could be established in Poland only against the resistance, and at the very least the working class' interests. While Ticktin does not do justice to the democratic opposition's programs (there were several), he shares, at least, one important feature with the regime and the Soviet leadership for opposing democratization: the fear that it might work. He is right in noting KOR's unwillingness to risk "Poland as. . .the sacrificial lamb of world socialism" (this was part of the organization's very principles). He does not share this reservation. After noting the impossibility of "socialism in one Poland" and the certainty of Russian intervention if the working class moved directly to take state power, he reminds Polish workers "that their struggle is not national, i.e., not specifically Polish, nor religious but part of an international movement of the working class in which their only real success could be in establishing workers's power for however short a time before it is crushed." [7] Here orthodox Marxism reveals itself for what it

6. Unlike the sectarians, a regime that has always deliberately misrepresented this point seems to realize quite well the immense importance for industrial workers of the communications network and the expert advice provided by intellectuals. The military regime's very first measures were to neutralize all such links.

7. Cf. "The Victory and the Tragedy of the Polish Workers," in *Critique*, 1981. Aside from standard mythology, the point is supported by entirely mistaken assumptions about the internal

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probably always was: rather than a theory *of* workers' emancipation, a program for disaster.

Under the impact of recent events, the argument has been further refined. Stressing the impossibility of structural reforms in Eastern Europe under the conditions of an intact totalitarian state rather than their undesirability, the sectarian Left today seems to argue that the Dec. 13 tragedy could have been avoided after all by a Polish workers' attempt to take state power. Had they been as honest as Ticktin, they would also have admitted that their antidote to one disaster would have involved the probability of an even greater one.

Indeed, the two arguments that Solidarity "went too far" and that it did not "go far enough" are both right against each other, and complementary. What is not "too far" for the first interpretation is co-option or eventual repression from the viewpoint of the second. And what is "far enough" for the second interpretation is a formula for disastrous Soviet intervention from the viewpoint of the first. Together, they reinforce a fatalistic view: despite all valiant efforts to the contrary, in Poland and in Eastern Europe no significant transformation is possible.[8] To reject both arguments is *not* to endorse uncritically Solidarity's course. What is needed is an evaluation of the hitherto unparalled achievement of a democratic movement in Eastern Europe, along with an analysis of its defeat, hoping thereby to isolate the history of Solidarity's contribution to future struggles for emancipation in Poland and elsewhere.

*The Democratic Movement's Achievement*

Sixteen months of detotalization of a totalitarian system[9] by a highly disciplined and self-restrained movement affecting almost every aspect of society is a remarkable and unprecedented achievement. In the process, a path for the social transformation of Eastern European societies was invented. Remarkably enough, it attempted to be *more compatible* with the preservation of the identity of a Soviet-type society (and therefore with the rationally understood interests of the Soviet Union) *and richer in forms of democratic experimentation* than its historical forerunners: 1956 and 1968. Were it not for economic disaster that was more one of its causes than its effect, the Polish 16 months would have put an end to the myth that Kadar's "liberal absolutism" is the highest stage of development for Eastern European societies today.[10]

Soviet consequences of an intervention in Poland based on sympathies for their Polish colleagues by a supposedly highly discontented Soviet working class and intelligentsia.

8. Both accounts can be combined. Such was Jadwiga Sztaniskis' position in "The Evolution of Forms of Working-Class Protest in Poland: Sociological Reflections on the Gdansk-Szczecin Case, August 1980," *Soviet Studies,* 33:2 (April 1981), pp. 204-231. According to her argument, which made her reject the compromise on the leading role of the party formula, the movement should have either aimed at political power from the beginning, or accept integration into the existing union structure. However, as events wore on, Sztaniskis apparently changed her mind and accepted what she called the program of the "self-limiting revolution" with all its contradictions.

9. Ferenc Feher, "Die sozialistische Länder Osteuropas am Beginn der 80er Jahre" in *Polen — Symptome und Ursachen,* p. 221.

10. Mihaly Vajda, "Polen — Ungarn," in Sozialistischer Osteuropakommittee, *Polen 81*

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Similarly, the achievement of the Polish democratic movement reaches beyond its Eastern European context. While Polish society liberated itself from a form of state organization obsolete from a Western viewpoint,[11] in the process civil society began to re-invent itself in forms that point beyond the institutionalization of civil society in the West — forms extremely relevant for the democratization of Western social life.

Of course, it is hazardous to consider forms of Polish civil society as a model, for they were limited in the generation of a Western-type parliamentary state by the threat of Russian intervention. Indeed, efforts not to seek state power but only some freedom from and control over this power was largely a function of historical constraints and only partly the participants' principled and conscious choice. The Polish opposition was thus forced into a program theoretically articulated in the West by people such as Gorz and Touraine: the self-organization of society. In Poland, neither a non-existent independent economy nor the state could generate social independence. Civil society, organized as social movements, had to undertake the task within limits that made self-organization an end in itself. Thus, the paradoxical result: a social movement seeking only to instruct itself, and avoiding all theoretical articulations of its project, managed to contribute important clues concerning a democratic and socialist civil society based on solidarity, plurality, communication free of domination, and democratic participation.

The emergence of a new type of civil society in Poland in the last year and a half was characterized by several institutional innovations. In *legality* the movement's stress was on political freedoms of assembly, association (independent union), collective action (right to strike), and freedoms of press and of speech. Individual rights and freedoms were seen as necessary presuppositions of collective rights rather than, as in the West, being tied to private property. Instead of expressing "the mute identity of interests among competing individuals" the Polish workers' and intellectuals' legal demands aimed at a civil society based on "voluntary solidarity within and among the various particularistic interest groups."[12] This is important because it points to another dimension of civil society: *plurality*. The Polish democratic opposition abandoned the Jacobin suspicion of the organization of particular interests. While the industrial working class alone had sufficient power to pressure the regime, no one postulated its interests as universal or the

(Hamburg, 1981). The point retains its validity even if the so-called liberals associated with the Polish Junta have made a Kadarist system the ideal goal of their efforts. With most of the presuppositions of the Hungarian solution missing, they can achieve either a semi-permanent authoritarian solution that will lead to stagnation of all levels of life or will have to accept a return to the path of development that will immediately surpass the terms of Kadarism. Cf. Mihaly Vajda, "Is Kadarism an Alternative?" in *Telos*, 39 (Spring 1979), pp. 172-179, and Ferenc Feher, "Kadarism as the Model State of Khrushchevism," in *Telos*, 40 (Summer 1979), pp. 19-31.

11. See my "Civil Society vs. the State: Poland 1980-81," *Telos*, 47 (Spring 1981), pp. 23-47.

12. György Markus, "Planning the Crisis: Remarks on the Economic System of Soviet-type Societies," *Praxis International*, 3 (October 1981), p. 257.

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desirability of establishing a pure working class form of rule. These myths were left to the ruling party — though for a decade or so it has also substituted national for Marxist legitimacy claims. Instead of claiming to represent society, the workers' organization played a major role in helping organize other strata such as peasants and students. There was no substitutionism: intellectuals could either work with Solidarity or form their own organizations.

The pluralism that emerged differed significantly from the liberal model of voluntary associations. The major new organizations were movements organized as democratically as possible and in fundamental solidarity with each other, in spite of differing interests. Unlike voluntary associations, social movements do not operate within established institutional patterns, but challenge their very interpretation.[13] Within its own sphere, each social movement in Poland challenged the meaning of the new institutional situation resulting from the historical achievement of the summer of 1980. Organized as social movements, pluralism generates not only a new solidarity but also contributes to the emergence of a new public sphere.

Even before August 31, 1980, the alternative literary *public sphere* created by the opposition had a new structure. The world of the *samizdat*, which came to involve the immense majority of the population, replaced commercial and propagandistic cultural goals with self-education. Market exchange and central redistribution were replaced by a system of comprehensive reciprocity.[14] While this state of affairs could not have survived in its original form after the post-August 31 stabilization, its democratizing impetus was incorporated in the new diversity of publics that emerged. As in all Eastern European societies, the official public sphere in Poland has had primarily demonstrative and substitutionist functions: the power of the party-state is demonstrated through the open control of symbolic life and *the occupation* of all the key channels where socially significant information about society is produced and disseminated. The strictest secrecy and censorship surrounded all decisions and compromises — including those with the Church and with some intellectuals' and workers' groups during the Gierek period.[15]

Point 3 of the Gdansk "21 points" squarely called for respect for constitutional freedoms of speech and of the press by guaranteed access to official media and full toleration of unofficial publications. Eventually, there *was* a partial liberalization of the official press and a demonstrative, if only selective and lamely manipulative, attempt by government and party organs to publicize their own procedures. More importantly, in Poland, the conflict between manipulative and critical public opinion became a far more

13. See Alain Touraine, *The Voice and the Eye* (New York, 1981). I strongly disagree with Touraine concerning the possibility of only *one* movement in a given society. Concerning Poland, see Jacek Kuron, "Pour une Platforme Unique de l'Opposition" in *La Pologne: une Société en Dissidence* (Paris, 1978).

14. The literary public sphere is thoroughly analyzed by Jeffrey Goldfarb, *On Cultural Freedom. An Exploration of Public Life in Poland and America* (Chicago, 1982).

15. Cf. Sztaniskis, *op.cit.*, pp. 204-205.

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balanced one than in any other industrial society. Above all, the opposition's principle of a democratic sphere aiming at self-educating and based on reciprocity was applied to the very organizations of the opposition: the demands for public openness were extended from state organs to all organizations carrying on significant activities *vis-à-vis* the state.[16] During the 16 months there was an effective opposition not against compromises as such, but against secret ones unsupervised by public opinion. The journals and pamphlets of the *samizdat* period changed from being exclusively an alternative means of information into supervising and thereby democratizing the new social movements. Thus, in Poland the public sphere was restored not as the media for individual intercourse (the liberal model) but as the media for organized groups able to pressure both the state and their own organizations.

*Democratic participation*, however, was not limited to the new public sphere, or even to the internal rules and procedures of the new organizations. Polish workers learned quickly to substitute demands for democratic participation for purely economic demands that could not be satisfied under conditions of near economic collapse. Solidarity itself could emerge only as a result of such a substitution. Furthermore, all sides realized that the reconstruction of the Polish economy required a long period of austerity. From the workers' viewpoint the trade-off could only be further democratization. The whole discussion of economic reform between government and Solidarity experts reflected this situation. All seemed to agree that some version of workers' self-management and some form of democratic control-mechanism over global plans would have to be parts of the urgently needed comprehensive economic reforms. On the technical economic level, discussions concerning planning,[17] market and self-management merely continued earlier Eastern European discussions and experiments. But, politically, reformers on both sides assumed that the Polish solution would go beyond every hitherto completed reform of state socialist economies. Government-oriented reformers saw this in limited terms; any form of self-management would go far beyond the Hungarian model, the continuation of global planning beyond the Yugoslav one. The democratic opposition saw the gains as more dramatic because of one crucial fact: the existence of the independent, self-managed union. Thus, both workers' control and planning could take on new forms. Against the Yugoslav version of a manipulated self-management with uninformed workers facing local directors and a disorganized working class confronted with top-down party decisions, Solidarity was in a position to contribute to workers' self-determination in the factories and to mediate their participation in national planning.[18]

16. Of course, Habermas came up with this formulation in terms of a possible and desirable critical public sphere in the West. Cf. Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Oeffentlichkeit* (Neuwied and Berlin, 1962), pp. 274-275.

17. Cf. "Wirtschaftsreform in Polen," interview with Szeliga, economic editor of the journal *Polityka*, in *Polen-81, op.cit.*, pp. 60-61.

18. Brus, *op.cit.*, pp. 11-12; cf. also Aleksander Smolar, "L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution

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Solidarity, plurality, public opinion and participation: these are the Polish movement's accomplishments. But, in defeat, the very achievements of a revolution become ambiguous; they can be regarded either as signs of what could have been or as causes of the negative outcome. The objection that under the given historical conditions Poland could yield no clues toward a new type of civil society can thus be replaced by a new one: to the extent that such clues did emerge, they could only indicate that the whole enterprise was impossible. In other words, these very achievements could only exacerbate the *steering* problems of the resulting new version of authoritarian state socialism. The objection here is inevitable: such a dualistic arrangement in which civil society renounces creating a state adequate to it in return for social independence and some control over existing state power is inherently unstable and must lead to either society or state moving to abolish the other's institutions.[19] Thus, the Polish revolution's normative gains, i.e., an independent civil society, could not be stabilized under Polish conditions.[20] Could the outcome have been avoided? Even in the affirmative case, it is unclear whether some of the movement's very achievements were not in the way of such a stabilization.

*Two Conditions for Compromise*

Leaving aside the hidden project of the Soviet leadership and of hard-liners in the party, state security and military bureaucracies, the duality of powers that developed after August 31, 1980, could in principle have been institutionalized. Two conditions, however, were necessary: the development of entirely new institutions mediating society's and the state's interests; and new structures of socio-economic steering through comprehensive economic reforms. Neither of these had to involve totally unprecedented innovations. There had been recent trends in post-1968 crisis management in some countries, including Poland, toward state corporatist forms of compromise with some selected social groups and organizations.[21] In Poland, the generalization of such a solution to the Church, the unions, and perhaps key sectors of the

en Pologne," in *Esprit* (June 1981), pp. 122-123.

19. Claude Lefort, "Reculer les Frontières du Possible," in *Esprit* (January 1981).

20. Sztaniskis has made this objection even independently of the possibility of repression from above. While she was clearly wrong in 1979, in "On Some Contradictions of Socialist Society," *Soviet Studies* (April 1979), pp. 184-186, KOR's strategy based on the rebuilding of independent forms of social life would be only functional to the state from the viewpoint of containing and ritualizing the opposition, her objections remain relevant from the viewpoint of the institutionalization of a dualistic arrangement. In particular, she stressed the interpenetration of state and society and that the unity of society itself must be considered illusory. To be sure, the unity of society in confronting the authoritarian state was maintained. Developments, however, did lead to the interpenetration of the two sides. Thus, a struggle ensued for democratization in the party and against bureaucratization in society, along with some serious divisions in society. As a result, both possible steering centers were damaged; first of all, the party-state lost its ability to act positively in all key sectors of the economy and society, but also Solidarity lost its freedom of action *vis-à-vis* its own mass base. On the eve of the military coup the organization was threatened by splits and resignations. In Sztaniskis' various articles it is unclear how such an outcome could have been avoided.

21. Cf. Daniel Chirot, "The Corporatist Model and Socialism," *Theory and Society* (March 1980) and Sztaniskis, "The Evolution...," *op.cit.*

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intellectuals has, since August 1980, been the best hope of some so-called party reformers to contain the current crisis and to integrate its undesirable results without Soviet intervention. To the extent that this solution left no room for social independence and an authentic public sphere, it was always unacceptable to Solidarity, whose own projects for compromise included various forms of corporatism, pluralism and syndicalist versions of direct democracy. Something important was at stake here: the authoritarian state socialist organization principle (even if in a post-totalitarian form) on one side,[22] and the newly conquered social independence on the other. Nevertheless, during 1981, a compromise formula on how to compromise evolved in large-scale public discussion. It involved: (1) state corporatism in the state-administrative sector, including elements of the party, the army, the Church, and Solidarity in a government of national salvation constructed similarly to the existing one; (2) Social corporatism in the sense of the two or three independent organizations of society, Church and Solidarity (perhaps also Rural Solidarity), negotiating with the ruling party in the name of society as a whole within the context of a partially independent public sphere;[23] (3) The coexistence of a heterogeneity of the internal organization of group life; monistic (the Communist Party), old or new corporatist (the army, the Church); representative democratic or 'pluralistic' (Solidarity, Rural Solidarity) and syndicalist (factory councils and cooperatives).

Such a system of social compromise represented only the basis of a possible consensus in Polish society and it was neither institutionalized nor unopposed. By not representing the real aims of either side, the whole compromise would have made and already made both sides dissatisfied. But it was the only basis on which the existing party-state could have attained the long-term stability of a system still continuous with the existing one, and the social movement could have preserved some of its achievements.

In the case of economic reforms, the consensus was far more impressive: what opposition *did* exist was far less open. The disastrous state of the Polish economy, unprecedented in the history of state socialist societies, was the background of an almost general expectation that this time, as against all other false starts, a radical, structural reform would have to take place.[24] The outcome of Gierek's economic strategy and crisis management had discredited, even within the ruling party, those who had resisted even hesitant past reform attempts. Solidarity remained committed to economic reforms even if for a period it rejected formal participation in developing reform proposals. In line with its early self-image as a non-political trade union, the

22. See my "Critical Sociology and Authoritarian State Socialism" in Held and Thompson, eds., *Habermas: Critical Debates* (Cambridge, 1982).

23. Both aspects of this were of course themes of great contention. KOR especially initially sought to establish a pluralistic system of the aggregation of social interests. Thus, it advocated a national economic council in a sense that could be incompatible with the survival of the party-state. Similarly, Solidarity sought to extend the independence of the controlling role of the public sphere by demanding access to the electronic media.

24. Cf. Brus, *op.cit.*, and Domenico Mario Nuti, "Poland: Economic Collapse and Socialist Renewal," *New Left Review* (November-December 1981).

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new organization did not want to be identified with programs of austerity necessitated by the regime's earlier failures. But it was always demanded that, as soon as possible, the regime had to present society with proposals for reforms. Furthermore, Solidarity experts informally participated in the work of several commissions and some Solidarity economists quickly realized that without their pressures reform would not come about.[25]

Altogether, seven different projects of economic reforms came into existence in 16 months.[26] These programs were developed by very different groups of economists associated with various governmental commissions and some near Solidarity. Their remarkable feature was their overall compatibility. In fact, the later draft of the government's official program also reflected suggestions contained in proposals related to Solidarity. The overall trend of the proposals was not new. The main ideas went back to earlier models by Lange, Kalecki and especially Brus. Nevertheless, all reform drafts aimed at an economic structure combining a new system of planning concerned only with long-term macro-economic trends and using as its instruments only indirect forms of regulation (tax, credit, currency and, for a period, pricing) with a system of decentralized microeconomic management involving rational accounting based on "income" or "profit" and eventually market-oriented mechanisms of pricing and workers' control. Furthermore, all proposals involved roughly the same reorientation of investment priorities. They reflected simultaneously the interests of consumption and of greater economic returns — which in state socialist societies are nearly the same thing and both suffer at the same time.

While the various proposals involved few differences in the mechanism and growth priorities, crucial disagreements emerged in timing and political implications. The government preferred the introduction of reforms in stages that were reduced from three to two. The first of these, the so-called "little reform" (supposedly instituted Jan. 1, 1981, but without any effect) was to confine itself to the "decentralization of difficulties" desired by central authorities and to a partial reorientation of investment priorities that were not touched in 1980, despite signs of impending collapse in the consumer goods market.[27] The existing state of the economy was the apparent justification for not introducing more radical measures, the "great reform," until later. In particular, a market determination of prices was judged unsuitable during a period characterized by dramatic shortages. Whatever the merits of this argument, the economic situation certainly deteriorated because of the failure to implement the "great reform." The argument of those who demanded immediate implementation was based not so much on this sad reality, as on the Polish experiences in the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s with reforms that involved a similar incrementalism and

25. In the first few months this pressure was unfortunately restricted to a shift in investment priorities to the benefit of agriculture and consumption. S. Kurowski, "Die Wirtschaft im Jahr 1981," in Sozialistisches Osteuropakommittee, *Polen 1980* (Hamburg, 1980).

26. See Nuti, *op.cit.*, and J. Mujzel, "Vorstellungen über eine Wirtschaftsreform in Polen," *Polen 1980, op.cit.*, pp. 66ff.

27. Kurowski, *op.cit.*

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allowed the mobilization of the opponents of reforms when the hesitant moves already implemented could not yet bring benefits.[28] Thus, the slightly more radical aspects were scrapped even before implementation.

The crucial political difference among the proposals involved the meaning of workers' control. Once Solidarity became actively interested in self-management,[29] the version the workers' movement sponsored was clearly in conflict with the nomenklatura system of top-down party appointments that the government drafts tried to preserve.[30] Remarkably enough, the compromise eventually worked out, while not pleasing either side,[31] would have gone a long way in giving workers control over the appointment of most directors.

Despite such a high consensus concerning economic reforms, there were weighty structural reasons inhibiting their realization. Economic reforms of authoritarian state socialist systems are in principle possible only if they do not challenge this system's organizational principle. In Poland, such a development was difficult, not only because of the raging economic crisis as a result of drastic shortages of investment funds (without which decentralization could hardly work better than the original system), but also because of three serious political problems: (1) Given the *de facto* duality of power, an institutional mechanism involving at the very least the communist party, Solidarity and Rural Solidarity was required to institute the reforms (or at least to gain through bargaining the consent of the two major social organizations) and to supervise its implementation. Although proposed by Solidarity under the heading of a national council of the economy, such an institutional mechanism was never established. (2) Given the *de facto* withdrawal of the ruling party from social organizations and, to an important extent, from culture (not including the electronic media), a large-scale withdrawal from economic management would have deprived the party of most of its remaining functions. This could exacerbate the party's already serious identity crisis and threaten the employment of large sections of its apparatus. While the middle apparatus would be against reform in any case, the reformist section of the leadership might continue to dream of reforms *à la Hongroise*: reforms in the context of having regained the lost social and cultural ground, i.e., reforms without Solidarity.[32] (3) Given the unavoidable consequences of any reform of the Polish economy (inflation, austerity,

28. Brus, *op.cit.*, and Mujzel, *op.cit.*

29. Prodded by its "networks" already organizing *de facto* self-management, the National Commission of Solidarity fully adopted the issue as a center of its political strategy in July 1981. Cf. Sztaniskis, "One Year after August 1980: An Anatomy of Revolution," manuscript, pp. 15-17. Interesting in this context is the interview of the journal *Polityka* with the leaders of Solidarity, Nov. 1, 1980. Now in *L'Alternative* (January-February 1981).

30. Nuti, *op.cit.*, pp. 31-32.

31. Cf. Karel Modzelewski, "Polen steckt in einer Krise der Hoffnung," interview in *Der Spiegel*, Nov. 9, 1981.

32. Nuti is right when he claims that the regime was unable to act without Solidarity's consent. Cf. Nuti, *op.cit.*, p. 30. He should have added, however, that it was unwilling to act *with* this consent.

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unemployment as well as the possibility of new inequalities among industrial branches, regions and professions), it was more difficult to obtain the same overall consensus in Solidarity on the issue of economic reforms than on many others. While committed to reforms, for a while the organization unfortunately did not pursue them relentlessly enough (at least until the economic situation really got out of hand). After all, a trade union can sponsor unemployment and inflation only at the cost of its own identity crisis.

Yet, without reforms, the economic situation remained hopeless — all the more so, because with the existence of the independent union, a centrally managed and planned system could not function at all. If reforms were impossible, it was similarly impossible not to reform as long as society remained organized. But for reforms to become truly possible an institutional system of compromise had to be established. Everything depended on this. It was on this level that the regime's ultimate intentions regarding large-scale economic reforms became eventually clear.

*The Fate of Compromise and Reform*

Ultra-left critics of Solidarity as well as believers in the totalitarianism thesis generally claim that it was always unrealistic to postulate the possibility of compromises with the Polish regime. Aside from the fatalistic character of such an approach, a whole series of important compromises were actually reached. The government did enter into key agreements with organized workers, from the original August 1980 accords to compromises on the length of the work week, the creation of Rural Solidarity, and the definition of the role of workers' councils. The problem with these agreements was not that each side later sought to interpret them from its own viewpoint. This is the case with any agreement between antagonists with different interpretations of their common social framework. The real problem was the failure of all compromise over the question of institutionalizing compromise itself.

As already indicated, there was no shortage of suggestions on both sides concerning such institutions. The best known proposals were the ones for the council of the economy and a government of national salvation — both involving broad social participation, one pluralistic, the other corporatistic in structure. Until the very end, however, actual negotiations seemed to avoid the topic altogether. Their pattern became rather simple. Under extreme pressure and the threat of disaster, a few *Solidarity* leaders and a few experts in closed meetings repeatedly managed to get government negotiators' agreement (or vice versa) to compromise formulations that in all major instances managed to please neither side. Such agreements were immediately followed by charges of weakness on the part of party conservatives and undemocratic procedures by important groups in Solidarity. The second charge was technically right but missed the real problem. Under the existing extraordinary conditions, it was inevitable that Solidarity in some respects duplicated its antagonists' practices: without general legal regulation of conflict and compromise, a fully democratic participation of all levels of the organization was impossible and undesirable. Negotiating power had to be

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and was delegated to Walesa and his circle. What could have been attempted and was not was to place questions of procedures, democratic or not, in the forefront of demands. More important than the democratization of the union's own practice would have been the creation of some legally sanctioned institutions in which the representatives of society and the state could have negotiated on an ongoing basis and not just in emergency situations. It may be doubtful whether the regime would have conceded any such demands. Yet, at its greatest strength, Solidarity did not push for such a solution. Only when the regime began its final push toward a repressive solution did such demands become central.

Solidarity's September congress expressed (and did not cause) a very high degree of polarization bewteen state and society. It was in this context that various groups came forward with the idea of a government or front of national salvation whose main elements would be the Communist Party, the Catholic Church and Solidarity. Leaders of the collaborationist Catholic PAX and the official peasant party, but also of the reform communist DIP (Experience and Future) were among the sponsors. But so was the hard-line Politburo member Olszowski. Among important Solidarity leaders, Kuron, now the key adviser to Walesa, strongly defended this position as the last way out of the crisis. He saw that the compromise over workers' control and a government or front of national salvation as complementary parts of the best institutional solution under difficult circumstances. Jaruzelski discussed such a plan with Walesa and Archbishop Glemp on Nov. 4, and the issue came up again during formal government-union talks Nov. 17. But nothing came of it. Probably the opposition of the Moscow-supported party apparatus was strong and Jaruzelski, already in the process of completing preparations for the coup, most likely offered Solidarity only an unacceptable junior partnership in a coalition of five of six members — thus as part of the potential blame for actions which others would formulate. In any case, the Politburo did apparently approve *some* version of the plan on Nov. 10, 1981. Significantly enough, however, the opposition to such a plan, in any version, was apparently strongest in Solidarity itself. Even Kuron's proposal was seen as becoming involved in a moral swamp and as potentially discrediting Solidarity in the population's eyes.[33] According to the arguments, Solidarity could enter government only if the totalitarian structure was smashed (Rulewski) or gradually replaced by an alternative based on self-management (Modzelewski).

Such long-range projects had nothing to do with solving the current economic crisis. In this context, Solidarity chose to concentrate on one substantive issue (workers' self-management) and one institutional proposal (a pluralistic national economic council). For once, a substantive demand was linked to a key institutional innovation of far broader implications. Both aspects were linked to the discussion of economic reforms in Parliament.

33. Cf. *Der Spiegel* interview with Modzelewski and the interview with Ewa Milewicz concerning the response to Kurons proposal (Jan. 18, 1982).

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Without a significant self-management component, the union could not agree to the necessary sacrifices involved in the government's reforms, and without a national economic council there was absolutely no confidence that after a year of delays, major reforms would actually be instituted. After all, some government spokesmen (Szeliga) even admitted that the so-called "little reform," technically in effect since January 1981, had achieved little because of the resistance of the apparatus and of a significant part of the managerial elite. It was in this context that the last compromise between the regime and Solidarity emerged — one that followed the earlier pattern. While the agreement on workers' control and thus the whole reform package involved significant concessions to Solidarity, on the institutional question the government absolutely could not be moved. But now it was crystal clear to the union that within such a context the substantive concession itself meant nothing. Self-management without economic reforms was meaningless, and the fate of economic reforms without the institutionalization of the participation of the social forces behind it was highly uncertain. As a result, Solidarity had little to offer its rank and file already devastated by the economic crisis. "Moderates" such as Walesa and Kuron could not answer "radicals" who saw no alternative to polarization and confrontation. After concluding a series of compromises that, however, did not involve any compromises concerning institutions of compormise, Solidarity faced two potential disasters: the possibility of an uncontrolled uprising on the part of the population, and an attempt by the government to repress by force all independent social organizations. A very real fear of the first of these, all the more plausible because of internal tensions and possible splits in Solidarity itself, made the organization powerless in the face of the second, toward which party policy after July unfailingly aimed.

*Crisis and Strategy of the Regime*

Failure to institutionalize compromise and economic reforms, though not stage-managed by major social agents, had something to do with definite strategies. While Solidarity did not always pursue these objectives with sufficient determination, was lukewarm concerning a new type of government coalition, and in September even threatened to boycott economic reforms unless they included an acceptable formula for self-management, reforms and compromise corresponded to the most fundamental interests of the organization and its members — and this was expressed in the policies of its national commission. The same cannot be said about the party-state. There is little doubt that the party membership did not represent a separate constellation of interests in Polish society. But with the exception of a short and turbulent period before the party congress, this membership that supported democratic "horizontal links" within the party counted for little. The apparatus, i.e., all those who owed their position to the nomenklatura system, as well as the hierarchies of the state security organs, were resolutely for the preservation of the old system — hence against reform and compromise. These were the ones that supported reactionary forums and

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chauvinistic associations in the party. While there were hardly any "liberals" in the top leadership, for a period a pragmatic reformist faction amply balanced the hard-liners and the weak centrists. This overall picture, however, does not explain the outcome, and in particular the shift from the generally reformist attitude of the first few months to a strategy aiming to split, demoralize and destroy Solidarity. Today, the party blames Solidarity's radicalism for this shift. This, however, confuses cause and effect.

The existence of an organized society in general and an independent organization of industrial workers in particular created fundamental identity problems for the party. It was not so much the destruction of its claims to represent society and the working class that was difficult, but the loss of the immense number of organizational, control and cultural functions involved. The party could protect itself in the midst of crisis by a partial withdrawal from the various social spheres and by divesting itself of its polymorphic character (Sztaniskis). But to preserve its identity it had to find a new suitable sphere of operation: new roles and functions. According to Smolar,[34] in the new framework three clear-cut possibilities were open to the ruling party: (1) to become the mass party of the rulers and managers and to be forced into opposition; (2) to become fully democratic and to incorporate social plurality as its factions and tendencies; or (3) to remain Leninist internally but accept purely ceremonial functions in society, i.e., a kind of self-neutralization. None of these possibilities were acceptable to the apparatus and to the leadership — not to speak of the Soviet Union. For all three it was necessary that in some way the old identity of the party be preserved: thus, the meaning of the "leading role" formula. The party could either successfully stabilize something like its old role in a reduced but real sphere of operation, or it would have to destroy Solidarity and with it, the new situation causing its identity crisis. But both these roads could also mean the party's destruction. Evidently, the party leadership first chose the first alternative, exposing itself to the membership's democratizing spirit and to the machinations of the apparatus and security forces, and settled on the second only after its July congress.

The first strategy was already full of ambiguities. It is implausible to argue, with Sztaniskis, that the party-state regime as a whole sought a new kind of legitimacy based on a "social contract." But she is right in that there was a new division of labor between party and government, with the latter pursuing the policy of dialogue and the former, in accordance with Soviet wishes, creating minor roadblocks (e.g., conflict over registration of Solidarity). In such a situation, and with the *de facto* loss of party supervision over industry as well as social life and culture, the party's role became a negative one. In this sense, it is wrong to describe its unwillingness to initiate policy and its sluggishness to enter into and execute agreements, as "tactical errors."[35] Without such a course of action, the party would have lost its last possible role. Nevertheless, in the new division of labor, the government seemed to

34. Smolar, *op.cit.* p. 124.
35. Nuti, *op.cit.*, p. 28.

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dominate — thus both lending some of the aura of renewal to the top interlocking party leadership and making the leading role formula questionable even in its last possible sphere of operation, that of the state itself. This leading role was now reduced to a veto power, and even that, apparently, could be overruled.

Such a paradoxical outcome exposed the top leadership to a double attack. On the one hand, the apparatus and the security forces were mobilized with Soviet support, against a policy of weakness and retreat. Their activities turned into reactionary, ideologically oriented propaganda (the Katowice forum), attacks against opposition groups working with Solidarity — especially KOR — an attempt to use anti-Semitic campaigns against key figures of the democratic movement and, when all this failed, open police provocation against Solidarity culminating in the Bydgoszcz crisis. On the other hand, there was an open attempt on the part of rank and file organizations, the "horizontal links" movement, to force a democratization of the party in general and the party congress in particular. After successfully repulsing an internal challenge in the highest levels, it could only deal with the overall situation that threatened the party with disintegration by making important concessions to each side. This was revealed by the masterful orchestration of the party congress. Kania's group showed that it could manipulate formal democracy just as skillfully as the leaders of Western mass parties. (Of course, having a dossier on all delegates certainly helped Kania, the ex-security chief.) The resulting election of a new Central Committee and political bureau strengthened Kania's group, although key conservative and reform figures were included. More important was the fact that the bulk of those elected were new in politics and easily manipulated. They gave their greatest applause to a supposed reformer (Rakowski), but barely elected him to the Central Committee, and not to the Politburo.

The real victor in the party congress was the apparatus. From then on, the leadership adopted *their* "policy" of no retreat. To be sure, the partisans of horizontal links did not disappear, and the membership was not converted to the new line. But without a congress to prepare for, rank and file groups had no institutional means in the party to contribute to policy. While neither the membership or Polish society were fooled by the congress' "democratic" results (if the party managed to relegitimate itself anywhere, it was in the Western press), it was not immediately clear even to the opposition[36] that the reunification of the leadership and the apparatus (in a context when they no longer had to fear the membership) allowed the party as a whole to develop a unified strategy.

This strategy, which also meant the re-establishment of the party's full hegemony over the government, was neither new nor positive. It became clear rather early that the Soviet Union's attitude toward the new situation in Poland would be one of neither war or peace, since, unwilling to face the disastrous consequences of an invasion, the Russians preferred crisis and

36. Adam Michnik, "Auch verbündete Notabeln sind sterblich," in *Der Spiegel*, 33 (1981).

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decomposition to the stabilization of an undesirable social model.[37] The attitude of important parts of the party apparatus toward their own society was probably similar. There was an unmistakable desire to tire and discipline the population through a crisis that is not allowed to be solved. The party congress that formulated positive tasks only for the government but not for the party as such opened the way to a consistent pursuit of this same negative strategy. From this point on, leaders like Rakowski, earlier identified with reform and dialogue, came to ominously shift their emphasis to confrontation and irresolvable conflict.[38] As a result, in the midst of an economic crisis totally out of control, a dreaded polarization occurred that deprived the population of any real hope of solving the crisis through reform and compromise.

While some already precited that the army-state would replace the party-state after Jaruzelski became the party first secretary,[39] the military commissions' missions to the countryside were only tests of things to come. Governmental structures, in particular the Parliament, continued some of the earlier work toward reform and compromise, if in a very subordinate capacity — except for the important compromise on workers' control where it passed a version of the bill that, unlike the party's draft, could be accepted by Solidarity. It was the party, in the face of possible parliamentary resistance, that threatened a state of emergency and demanded the suspension of the right to strike. Jaruzelski himself represented the party's new line. This negative line, however, which provided functions only for the security and propaganda apparatuses, also brought a massive alienation of the membership, and exacerbated the identity crisis of the organization as a whole. It is clear that the apparatus and now the leadership's only response to this untenable situation was to press for a repressive solution for which the party itself had neither the organizational means nor even the minimum loyalty required.

*Solidarity as a Social Movement*

As a social movement, Solidarity developed under a double impact; its own immense success in organizing Polish society and the increasingly negative Communist Party strategy in blocking economic, legal and political reforms. There are two suggestive ways of looking at the resulting contradictions in Solidarity. With Nuti, one can see Solidarity as alternating from the beginning among three different and even incompatible roles: an oppositional political party effective in extorting concessions; a Western-type trade-union whose demands are incompatible with the priorities of economic recovery; and a "socialist-type union demanding responsible partnership in economic management." Although it is well informed, this scheme comes dangerously close to the position of some Communist Party reformers, who condemned

37. Smolar, *op.cit.*, p. 125; and S. Bialer, "Poland and the Soviet Imperium," in *Foreign Affairs*, February 1981, pp. 522ff.

38. See the remarkable interivew with Rakowski in *Der Spiegel*, Sept. 14, 1981, in which Augstein turns out to be just as "hard" as the vice premier himself.

39. Sztaniskis, "One Year after...," *op.cit.*, p. 2.

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what they took to be the first two of these roles, and defined union responsibility primarily through the need to discipline a supposedly unproductive work force. To be sure, Nuti defines responsible participation in terms of a trade-off between austerity, inflation and workers' control, but he misses the obvious point that such a deal was possible only on the basis of immense political pressure, and that before reforms were instituted, Solidarity could not act "responsible" under institutions that were yet to be created. And while he sees the need for Solidarity under the threat of suppression and absorption, to shift and alternate among its various roles, he does not realize that there was also a trend from emphasis on the one he takes to be that of a union to the other he takes to be that of a political party.

Such a development is stressed by Sztaniskis. In her more abstract and more adequate scheme, Solidarity moved from a stage of "self-limiting revolution" characterized by "too tight" a trade union formula (September 1980-March 1981) to a period of identity crisis involving the growth of its veto power over policy and the movement's partial implosion (up to July 1981) and finally to a stage of "open conspiracy" characterized by the "social movement formula" masking a contradiction between the activities of a mass movement and those of a "political party of activists." Here the difficulty is the opposite of Nuti's. The synchronic, rather than the diachronic, dimension is de-emphasized. While always too tight, the trade-union formula was never entirely abandoned (in particular by Walesa). The whole history of Solidarity was characterized by some identity crisis (a union without a legal sphere of operation, a revolutionary movement without a revolution); and the formulas of self-limitation and social movement apply and were applied to all stages of development. While those elements seeking to transform Solidarity into a party contesting political power became organizationally strong only in the last stage — the KPN (Confederation for an Independent Poland) — they were opposed by a contrary position still on the ground of the "new evolutionism" represented by Walesa and Kuron and were out-maneuvered by the compromise on workers' control that was the key achievement of this period. Their rhetorical victory during the last few days was a response to the coming disaster and not its real cause.

To understand Solidarity is to understand two unprecedented types of movement within Soviet-type societies: a historical movement that institutionalized a new, dual stage of this sytem, and a social movement (at first one among many) seeking to realize the maximum possible freedom and participation in this new stage.[40] The broadly based democratic movement of workers, peasants, intellectuals and Catholics that paved the way for August 31, 1980, has every right to the adjective historical. Yet it was an *interrupted* historical movement to the extent that the necessary preservation of the leading role of the party formula meant that in a still unspecified state sphere, the authoritarian socialist organizing principle would be preserved. This sphere, however, always included the domains of legislation and

40. Touraine, *The Voice and the Eye, op.cit.*, pp. 125ff, 129ff.

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administration of justice, allowing the regime to deprive the newly founded union of the means for legal, everyday functioning. Never claiming a vanguard role for all of Polish society, the independent union moved to relieve the pressure on its only weapon, the political strike, by helping through advice, example and actual participation the democratic self-organization of several other social spheres. It is in this area neglected by both Nuti and Sztaniskis that the most dramatic initial victories of Solidarity were won, including the registration of Rural Solidarity and of the Independent Student Association. The trade-union formula was sustained to the extent that the independent organization representing industrial workers, while preserving a movement form, was paralleled by a multiplicity of other interest representations — other movements challenging institutional structures and policies relevant to them.

Given the increasing self-organization of society, Solidarity could follow a trade-union tactic in yet another respect without having to fear the absorption of all new gains: in the context of the economy's disastrous conditions, the new prime minister Jaruzelski's call for a three-month voluntary strike pause was accepted even before the likely registration of Rural Solidarity. It was during this pause that the apparatus counter-attacked by severely harassing KOR — then somewhat alienated from the inner circle of union leadership — and then stage-managing the Bydgoszcz provocation.

It was not merely because of the supposedly mistaken and certainly undemocratically reached compromise following the Bydgoszcz crisis [41] that the stress on the trade-union formula was abandoned. Solidarity now had several reasons for seeking a new political posture and a new identity: (1) The continued non-existence of a legal framework for everyday interest representation and negotiation for any new social entities; (2) The non-existence of weapons other than the increasingly problematic strike, possessed only by Solidarity and not by other movements; (3) The apparatus' increasingly provocative attitude supported by the Soviet Union; (4) The simultaneous immense growth of Solidarity and the dramatic worsening of the economic crisis; (5) The internal challenge to union leadership on the issue of democracy but in a context of increasing radicalism of many union activists. Even under such pressures, however, Sztaniskis is right: for a period of three months or more no new identity and political profile was crystallized. For a while, several possibilities were simultaneously put forth. This was the only time when none apparently had primacy. The reason seems obvious. This was the period of the democratization wave in the Communist Party and of the open re-emergence of conservative forums in the party. Equally important, the Soviet Union intervened on the party's highest level and a power struggle took place within the Central Committee. Remarkably enough, the storm was weathered out by the existing leadership, but this outcome was far from certain at the time. While the reformist group's

41. Sztaniskis, "One Year after...," *op.cit.*, pp. 10ff.

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triumph at the party congress could have alleviated pressure on society, it could also have meant another 1968. Under those circumstances, while Solidarity could do little to influence a favorable outcome that might not have brought the party near collapse, it also had to await the outcome of the party congress and its ramifications in economics and politics.

That outcome as we now know only reinforced the worst confrontationist trends within the party — even if the ideological guise was not borrowed from the party conservatives. Preparing for its own congress, Solidarity countered with a new self-definition: a social movement for "the defense of union interests, social interests, national interests...against state power." [42] This was not a passive defensive tactic, but the full adoption of the drive for self-management already prepared by Solidarity's "networks" in 50 or more enterprises. The launching of a self-mangement strategy meant that Solidarity could now push for economic reforms and at least hope to decentralize the political burden the organization was forced to assume. Given the Communist Party's confrontation course, Solidarity became the one movement of Polish society — its efforts to the contrary notwithstanding. The organization's new self-definition sought to concede such a state of affairs while preparing another strategy to go beyond it.

Only in orthodox Marxist mythology is it to the advantage of workers to represent universal social interests. In Poland, the unavoidability of such a course was a sign of society's profound weakness. When the social movement formula was introduced, there was already strong sentiment for the redefinition of Solidarity as a political party. Probably very few people in the organization understood Kuron's point that the self-limitation of the revolution was not only a necessity but also a virtue and that when a social movement becomes a party, and that party gains state power, society loses its organization and defense. If the formula of a political party lost in the organization, it did so because of pragmatic reasons and maybe Walesa's personal role.

At any rate, the social movement formula was profoundly ambiguous. Did the organization of society as *one* social movement mean the resumption of the interrupted revolution? [43] Or did it signify an increasing struggle within a self-limiting revolution for the maximum possible social freedom and participation? Those who otherwise understood the necessary self-limitation of the Polish revolution and who rejected attempts to form either a revolutionary or a parliamentary party were divided on this all-important point. Even Modzelewski was thinking ahead to the adaptation of the state, reorganized through self-management structures, to new social conditions, at a time when Kuron saw participation in a front of national salvation as the last way out of the crisis, and to save Solidarity. Solidarity's congress embodied the contradiction in a more extreme form. (Here even Modzelewski

42. Cf. Jacek Kuron, "Wir leben gleichsam in einer Wüste," a speech given July 25, reproduced in part in *Der Spiegel*, 34 (1981).

43. S. Blumsztajn, "Jaruzelski's Versprechungen sind Wertlos," interview in *Der Spiegel*, January 1982.

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was reluctantly on Kuron's and Walesa's side.) The resolutions of the first session clearly expressed the majority's opinion that the interrupted revolution must be continued. But this outcome was on a purely rhetorical level and Polish and Soviet authorities, in spite of their propagandistic manipulation of the results to scare all those anxious to be scared, always knew this to be the case. The real winners at the congress, in terms of decisions on actual strategy, were the partisans of the new evolutionism. The all-important compromise on workers' control demonstrates this. And yet, by this time, they were in a numerical minority [44] not only in the congress but among the organization's activists. Among the rank and file, there was a new fundamentalism opposed to compromise (based on the rejection of any contaminating contact with the regime) — a fundamentalism that even before the coup and its aftermath could be recognized as in essence unpolitical and in effect less radical than the politics of the so-called moderates. (Sztaniskis, whose own earlier analyses were marked by a touch of fundamentalism, is very perceptive on this point.)

The rise of this new fundamentalism is easily explained. All along Solidarity incorporated activists of opposition groups who sought the overthrow of the existing state. Only towards the end did they attain some political importance. If the project of a total political revolution was always impossible, now that of a self-limiting social movement was rapidly approaching the same status. For Solidarity's rank and file the fact that their movement represented the country's most powerful social organization and, unlike the party and the government, possessed overwhelming legitimacy, yet was unable to do anything about the disastrous economic situation, must have appeared intolerable. When they realized that neither the radicals' rhetorical victory nor the moderates' strategic victory would change this state of affairs, they responded with the wildcat strike movement. In Modzelewski's words, the Polish crisis became a "crisis of hope."

A self-limiting social movement is impossible without social reforms. But reformism in the party leadership (if not in some government branches) was abandoned or at least suspended after the Communist Party's July congress. It is one of the lessons of the Polish events that in extraordinary situations structural reforms can even be achieved from below, i.e., extorted from state power. It is unfortunately another lesson that the institutionalization of these important structural reforms further presupposes economic, political and legal reforms from above. Some clearly understood this lesson. Hence, Kuron's support for a national government of salvation, and Walesa's desperate attempts to bring the wildcat movement under control The real problem, however, was the economy. There were plans to organize a pure self-managing system from below, beginning with an alternative network of distribution disposing over the results of unpaid overtime work. As all activities within a second economy in Eastern Europe, however, such a solution presupposed the regime's tacit cooperation. Thus, the union discovered that it did not have the material means for instituting it. An

44. See report in *Le Monde*, Oct. 1, 1981.

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alternative economy, just like a parasitic second economy, presupposes a functioning first economy, something that only economic reforms could re-establish. Given the international context of the Polish economy, there was obviously no hope of an alternative economy replacing the official one. In this context too, Solidarity discovered that a reconciliation with the regime could not be bypassed. But while the regime remained powerless to institute its own version of economic reforms without Solidarity's consent, it was also unwilling to institute any reform with that consent. Hence, the all-important Solidarity proposal for a national economic council that could have ironed out all remaining differences was rejected precisely because it promised success.

In the context of a social movement without reforms, the successes of the union's national commission to disarm wildcat movements could only be temporary. Aside from the danger of state repression, the leadership had to face related dangers of losing its own remaining influence with its base, and the possibility of a mass explosion. They knew that this second set of dangers could only lead to disaster and they believed that the government left them no other way of dealing with it than to make continual rhetorical concessions to an increasing radicalism culminating in the Radom meeting Dec. 3 and the resolution during the night of Dec. 12. This way they hoped to save Solidarity's influence which they saw as the last chance for containing what could have become an uncontrollable popular outbreak. This policy of swimming with the radical tide, however, was based on one fundamental mistake: an underestimation of the sovereign power of the Polish state.[45]

*Sovereignty and Legitimacy*

Undoubtedly, Solidarity was unprepared for the Dec. 13 events. Although there is some evidence[46] that the eventual scenario was brought to the attention of relevant persons in Solidarity, the problem was most likely not the lack of information so much as its overabundance.[47] Solidarity's leaders were

45. Maria Zielinska's and Jan Walc's report in *Der Spiegel,* Dec. 14, 1981 (but written several days before the coup) documents both these aspects. While they maintain that the radical rhetoric at the famous Dec. 3. Radom conference of the Solidarity leadership was a response to repeated threats of a state of emergency by the Communist Party's Central Committee that were vigorously resisted by the Church and Parliament, the two authors, Warsaw journalists of Solidarity, seem to endorse a drive toward state power because of their own fear of an uncontrolled popular explosion. Even at this very late date, however, they considered the threat of a state of emergency to be more or less empty. And the leadership that did believe in the threat on Dec. 3 was also convinced that the regime did not have the power to carry it out. They seemed to believe that such an attempt would lead to Solidarity's forming a provisional government as long as the Russians could be given suitable guarantees. Such was the meaning probably of their last resolution, calling for a possible referendum, one that was apparently resisted by Walesa. We now have the testimony of longtime KOR member Ewa Milewicz that Kuron more or less accurately predicted on Dec. 4 the outcome of a state of emergency. Cf. *Der Spiegel,* Jan. 18, 1982. Neither he nor Walesa, however, attempted to dampen the radical enthusiasm at Radom with such considerations, probably because they also feared a popular explosion above all.

46. Cf. interview with Gen. L. Dubicki, in *Der Spiegel,* Dec. 28, 1981, p. 57.

47. The regime went a very long way to misinform Solidarity on this score. It repeatedly threatened the calling of a state of emergency through Parliament, and by Dec. 3 convinced the Solidarity leaders of the reality of this actually discarded version of what was to happen. When it provoked the desired radical rhetoric at Radom, the state of emergency threat was abandoned,

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convinced of the overwhelming hegemony of their organization in Polish society. But, they wrongly believed that this would protect them from political repression by Polish forces alone. They were right to seriously doubt the possibility of Soviet intervention, that in any case could be resisted only by all of the Polish nation and not the union as such. But they were wrong to think that between their own power in Polish society and the power of the Russians over the Polish state there existed a political vacuum, presided over by *the fiction* of sovereign Polish political power. Given the collapse of the regime's legitimacy and its inability to govern, and given the reduced sovereignty of the Polish state, it was not entirely unreasonable to discount the ability of this state to repress the mass movement of almost all of Polish society. Unfortunately, massive collapse of legitimacy did not have to mean that the regime possessed no bases whatsoever. Similarly, "impotence" to govern could be part of a deliberate strategy seeking to rebuild the state's sovereign power in the context of a stalemate unacceptable to certain key strata of the population — first and foremost, the officer corps. Finally, the Polish state's residual sovereignty could be expanded if a specific Polish version of authoritarian state socialism could successfully tap the resources of national legitimization.

Legitimacy is equivalent neither to interest, nor to sovereign power; delegitimation need not mean the absence of social interests implicated in the survival of a form of rule, nor the automatic collapse of sovereign power. All Eastern European state socialist systems have created social structures that privilege the existence of far wider social strata than merely party members and the state apparatus.[48] Some of these interests were at stake in a fundamental social transformation such as the one occurring in Poland in 1980-81. Large-scale economic reforms were utterly dangerous to the apparatus, but also a large part of the planning and managerial elite, and even to many industrial workers. The independence of the workers' movement may have been generally welcomed, but the same may not have been the case for the inevitable status revolution threatening to reverse the existing social evaluation of blue and white collar workers and intellectuals. Finally, while the general national enthusiasm was certainly shared by the members and even officers of the armed forces and perhaps the police, the weakening of all authority structures and the alleged threat to public order was probably resisted.

In the context of the self-organization of society, such a constellation of opposed (but passive and disorganized) interests could not by themselves have seriously affected the drive toward a new social order. They could become relevant, as what the authorities now evocatively call the Polish "silent majority," only if the state could generate sufficient sovereign power to act

thereby convincing the Solidarity leaders of what they were in any case highly inclined to believe, i.e., that because of the expected popular response, the whole strategy was abandoned. All this is clearly reflected in Zielinski and Walc, *op.cit.* Cf. also Blumsztajn in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, Jan. 9-15, 1982.

48. For three views on this subject see Mark Rakowski, *Toward an East European Marxism* (London, 1978); Ivan Szelenyi and György Konrad, *The Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power* (New York, 1979); and Rudolf Bahro, *The Alternative in Eastern Europe* (London, 1979).

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decisively and repressively. While sovereignty is not identical to legitimacy, it is nevertheless doubtful that on Aug. 31, 1980, the Polish regime possessed any sovereign power at all. The democratic movement faced, however, the very real power of the Soviet Union, and the implication was that the tottering Polish regime could not be overthrown. Its sovereignty had to be accepted as a double fiction in relation to both Polish civil society and the Soviet imperial state. But precisely because it was double, i.e., because this very limited form of sovereignty was protected against each of the real possessors of power by the other, it actually amounted to a form of residual sovereignty rebuildable under certain conditions. A pluralistic social order seeking above all to limit the power of the state and its key branches could have contributed to the strengthening of this state which continued to possess all the legal means of violence.

Neumann has discussed the problem of the relation of a "pluralism" grounded in social "contract" and the sovereign power such agreements seek to render purely residual.[49] According to him, the functioning of such a system presupposes the fundamentally unchanged existence of the contracting parties, their continued willingness to abide by the terms, and the existence of a neutral coercive instance in case they do not. Neumann, however, considered these conditions highly unlikely: they did not exist in the Weimar Republic he analyzed, nor did they in Poland after the Gdansk agreements. Of the two contracting parties, Solidarity was unavoidably on the path of organizing all of Polish society, and eventualy becoming its one social movement. The party-state, too, went through a rapid transformation that decisively affected whatever willingness it might have had to abide by the terms of the agreement. And while there were neutral instances — the Church, some groups of intellectuals and even at times Parliament — they all lacked any coercive power. In such a situation, Neumann warns, the strengthening of executive power is almost unavoidable.

Unfortunately, the argument works all too well for the Polish crisis. While the social movement was hegemonic in society, it was forced to discover that there were key tasks in the economy and in society that could be solved only by *a state*. More particularly, in the Polish situation they could be solved only on the basis of a structure of compromise that was deliberately sabotaged by the other party necessary to it. The Communist Party could not force its will on society, but it could insure the emergence of a "decisionless" political order. Through economic crises, the projected result was the exhaustion of society. While the extent of this success cannot be fully evaluated, yet another aspect — perhaps unintended — was dramatically successful: the reconstitution of sovereign power itself.

Sovereign power, in the context of political stalemate and the radicalization of Solidarity's rhetoric, could now be represented as saving the country from both economic crisis and foreign intervention. While the Polish movement was blocked by the Soviet threat, this same threat worked in reverse for the violent

49. Cf. Franz Neumann, "The Change of the Function of Law in Modern Society," *The Democratic and the Authoritarian State* (New York, 1957), pp. 47-50.

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abrogation of the Gdansk accords from above — something that the Soviet Union continually sought through the Communist Party. This strategy could succeed, i.e., avoid a bloody uprising leading to a highly undesirable Soviet intervention followed by a Budapest-type scenario in far worse internal and external circumstances, only if its agents were other than the Communist Party and appeared in national colors. Through the whole period, Solidarity was wrong to assume that the army was unambiguously on its side. For the key officer corps that may have been true only, at best, in the context of Soviet intervention or perhaps in the case of repression initiated directly by the Communist Party. As is now clear, this officer corps could act in its own name, had ample forces at its disposal[50] and could isolate the bulk of pro-Solidarity recruits. Most importantly, this officer corps had an ideological medium to justify its actions to itself and to the Polish "silent majority": authoritarian nationalism.

The availability of nationalist ideology for authoritarian purposes must be seen as the long-term result of a process in which both government and the opposition participated. It is too simple to argue that the opposition represents all that is good in the Polish tradition, the government all that is bad. As all Soviet-type states, the Polish regime has gravitated since the late 1960s toward replacement, or rather supplementation, of an increasingly empty official ideology by nationalistic justifications — at times (1968) of a very ugly sort. The use of nationalism, however, was a double-edged weapon.[51] The opposition could easily utilize various aspects of it against a state that lacked the crucial criterion of any nationalist ideology: independence. Within the milieu of the opposition's alternative culture, the national issue had pride of place. This, of course, involved a revival of many aspects of the Polish national tradition, ranging from an extreme chauvinistic rhetoric to the linking of the issues of national independence and social justice.[52] But just as the revival of nationalist justifications could be turned against the regime, their wide dissemination and revalidation contributed to an intellectual atmosphere that could be turned against the opposition. From early 1981, the reactionaries in the party (e.g., the so-called Grunwald league) reintroduced anti-Semitic chauvinism and have made ample use of it ever since — especially after the coup.[53] And above such sordidness, but making at least negative use of it to enhance his own "milder" authority, stands Gen. Jaruzelski, draped in the mantle of the nation's savior: Jozef Pilsudski.[54]

50. See the interview with Dubicki, *op.cit.*, and M. Checinski's letter to *The New York Times*, Jan. 6, 1982.

51. Cf. my "Understanding Bureaucratic Centralism" in *Telos*, 35 (Spring 1978), pp. 73-85.

52. Adam Michnik, "Les Ombres des Ancetres Oubliés," *Recherches* (October 1978).

53. See the report of I.S. Karol in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, Dec. 26, 1981.

54. Even now, members of the Polish opposition hesitate to point to Jaruzelski's deliberate attempt to play Pilsudski's role. Yet, several parallels with Pilsudski's military dictatorship are inescapable, especially since Jaruzelski's regime avoids all appeals to any Marxist-Leninist or even vaguely state socialist legitimations. Cf. J. Rothschild, *Pulsudski's Coup d'Etat* (New York, 1966). This does not mean that the outcome will resemble Pilsudski's *sanacja*, whatever the actual intentions of some participants may be.

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*Poland, Russia and the West*

The coup's outcome remains far from clear. The military putschists undoubtedly had their own scenario. Dressed in national colors and hoping for at least the Church's passive support, they sought to convince the nation not only of the need for their action in the face of the dangers of civil war and external intervention, but also of their intention to vigorously pursue the reform policy that was bogged down in political and social crisis. Their early treatment of Walesa indicates that they perhaps hoped to reactivate the corporatist alternative that was periodically raised earlier, but this time only with a rump of Solidarity — and therefore with a strongly reduced component of social independence. Finally, it is possible that what some of the so-called reformers like Rakowski hoped from the coup was a kind of Polish Kadarism. If they were anything more than a campaign for internal and external deception, these hopes were based on delusions.

Kadarism in Hungary was based on a violent and bloody war against the Hungarian population that presupposed armed Soviet intervention, the destruction of the older party apparatus by the uprising, the forced collectivization of agriculture followed by the relaxation and a rational division of labor between collectives and private plots, and a relatively good international context for an economy that was deformed only for a relatively short time by the most rigid form of Sovietization. None of these conditions can apply in Poland after the coup. Here economic reforms presuppose the large-scale, long-run voluntary cooperation of the Polish people. It is in this context that the military putschists turned out to be criminally ignorant. Their dreams of collaboration by a rump Solidarity and Walesa were soon shattered, and this brought a visible hardening of the Church that seemed to be split in the early days of the coup. Most importantly, after the short period of open resistance of the population was broken, a period of passive resistance followed, the extent of which cannot yet be estimated. Without the revival of some social independence, Poland confronts a long period of stagnation. The corporatist dreams of some of the putschists cannot be revived without serious concessions to the population. The new regime, however, seems incapable or unwilling to make such concessions.

To consider alternative developments requires an understanding of the social actors involved. There is some question whether the army acted on its own or merely as a proxy for the Soviet Union and the Communist Party. Most of the forces actually used belonged to the ministry of interior and the police. This, however, is not very relevant. The coup had to presuppose the officer corps' active or passive support. Similarly, the leading generals seemed to regard themselves as independent agents while the hard-liners hoped to re-establish their earlier authority. No matter who actually initiated the course of events, the army, the Soviet Union, and the Communist Party are stuck with one another for the foreseeable future. The Polish and the Russian Communist parties cannot endanger the delicate balance of authority, thus risking rebellion involving the armed forces in order to re-establish a more orthodox type of communist system. Given the new importance of the Soviet

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military-industrial complex,[55] however, they need not reject an openly militaristic version of authoritarian state socialism. If a partially reformist experimentation, corresponding to the preferences of some Soviet interest groups, can be permitted in Hungary, why not allow similar experimentation with yet another model? After all, satellites that have developed their own version of a Soviet-type society tend to be the most stable partners in the imperial system.

Yet, the army leadership cannot move against the party hard-liners or the apparatus. The Soviet Union may not allow them to go so far in the direction of a uniquely Polish road. Furthermore, in the context of a crisis that threatens to become permanent, the generals cannot do without the reliable administrators that they do have in the apparatus, and they cannot further reduce their mass bases already shrinking as a result of the coup's bleak impact on economic life.

Army and party leaderships are stuck with one another and they limit each other's freedom. The party apparatus and hard-liners cannot be as repressive as they would want, and the army leadership and "reformers" allied to them seem constantly checked in their efforts to make even the mildest concessions necessary for minimal negotiations. The future orientation of the junta is riddled with similar contradictions. Thus, unless social pressures manage to balance out the apparatus' pressure, there can be no "reform alternative" which, under Polish conditions, presupposes some measure of social independence.

Such pressures today depend on the Church and Solidarity. While the Church could live with a corporatist solution involving the restoration of some elementary rights, it has by now lost the earlier confidence of some of its members that such a solution would be instituted from above after calm had been restored. Under conditions of martial law and internment, it will not give the regime even passive support. As Glemp's sermon in Rome shows, the Church considers the regime responsible for the threat of a violent uprising and civil war. Given this attitude, the regime's nationalist legitimation remains very shaky.

While Solidarity suffered a crushing defeat, it was by no means destroyed. Despite all its internal criticism, it was a highly democratic mass organization — and thus one in no position to prepare for the coup by establishing secret networks, an alternative leadership, etc. The arrest of its existing leaders and the destruction of its communication network completely incapacitated it during the coup's first few crucial days. On the other hand, a democratic and decentralized organization is not destroyed along with its leaders. In 1980-81, the learning experience involved hundreds of thousands directly, and millions indirectly. Whether industrial workers are capable of a major victory without the help of the communication networks of the democratic opposition remains uncertain. What is clear, however, is that they will try. A sign recently spotted by Western correspondents in the Lenin shipyards may turn out to be prophetic: "Winter is yours, Spring will be ours!"

55. Cf. Cornelius Castoriadis, *Devant la Guerre* (Paris, 1981) and "Facing the War," in *Telos* 46 (Winter 1980-81), pp. 43-61.

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It is in this context that the potential role of Western governments becomes relevant. It is clear that the only possible way to support the Polish democratic movement is with the stick of economic sanctions and the carrot of large-scale economic aid. To be effective, *threats and promises* must be addressed to both Polish and Soviet governments, and must be presented in stages to affect events as they unfold. The American government's motives for half-heartedly undertaking such a policy and the Western Europeans refusal to follow are equally suspicious. What is really unclear, however, is why, with the exception of the French,[56] the European Left so whole-heartedly shared their governments' position.

Most European pacifists and socialists seem to feel that participation in sanctions would strengthen American influence in Europe and block the way toward European disarmament that presupposes the good will of the Soviet Union and the survival of *Ostpolitik* at all price. This attitude presupposes what Reagan's and Weinberger's rhetoric seems to prove, i.e., that the U.S. is the greatest threat to the peace and independence of Western Europe. It further presupposes that those seeking a third road for Western Europe have little to fear from the Soviet Union — and this at a time when the Russians have demonstrated that they have now mastered genuinely modern, i.e., indirect, forms of restoring order in their empire!

All political postures involve some assumptions. Today, Leftists tend to assume one of two positions concerning Soviet development: either the Soviet Union is seen caught up in a hopeless crisis that will make it increasingly cautious and conservative, or it must inevitably undertake reforms implying commitment to detente and to wide-ranging, new economic relations with Europe. Both have some validity. The Soviet system *is* in deep crisis, and economic reforms remain one of its alternatives. But they are by no means the only ones. As Castoriadis has shown, the failure of the Soviet economy has not meant the failure of its military-industrial complex, just as the collapse of its Marxist-Leninist ideology has only led to its replacement by what he calls the nationalist-imperial imaginary. Castoriadis thus deduces only one possible policy alternative for the Soviet empire: military-geopolitical expansion. It is his merit to have seriously confronted the Western Left with this developmental possibility. Yet this road, too, while more plausible than the old-fashioned idea of the inevitability of reforms,[57] is only one alternative. Since Stalin's death, Soviet history has oscillated between half-hearted reforms and re-Stalinization, corresponding to a regular cycle of shifting investment priorities.[58] Yet, there has been neither a consistent implementation of reforms nor a complete reversion to Stalinism. The first seems too threatening for the system's principle of identity while the second is too dangerous to its elite's physical existence. Today, however, the system's cyclical oscillations have resulted in a dangerous economic stagnation. The most likely choice,

56. See the special issue of *Le Nouvel Observateur* on the gas deal, Feb. 8, 1982.
57. Cf. Moishe Lewin, *Political Undercurrents of Soviet Economic Debates* (Princeton, 1974).
58. Cf. Markus, *op.cit.*, p. 241.

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therefore, seems to be between cautious but now irreversible reforms or re-Stalinization, but with Great Russian nationalism rather than terror as its cement.[59] Either of these forms, however, would involve the great danger of social or national conflict. Thus, the Soviet leaders who will follow Brezhnev's generation will hesitate to adopt either option without more serious revisions than have hitherto been suggested.

Any explanation of Soviet development alternatives must take into account the immense military buildup that only apologists can now see as defensive.[60] On the Left, so far this task has been taken up only by Castoriadis. His is the only way to give substance to the alternative of re-Stalinization. Only in a dynamically expanding empire could Soviet internal nationality conflicts be contained. Today, however, no power can hope to combine a land-based as well as an overseas empire. In fact, Eastern Europe by itself seems to exhaust Soviet capacities for a type of imperial synthesis based on direct military authority. Thus, Soviet foreign policy as well as its military and trade postures point to a somewhat different direction suggesting cautious and stabilizable reforms.

Evidently, Soviet foreign policy is based on *both* military buildup and expansion of many-levelled economic relations with Western Europe. The former is aimed at establishing an absolute military superiority in Europe (and not worldwide, where it would be meaningless). The latter is based on a tradeoff of primarily raw materials for investment capital, high technology goods, and food. While the latter threatens to reduce the Soviet Union to a permanently dependent economy, the former establishes it as the strongest European state, involved in a balance of terror stalemate with the United States. For orthodox Marxists, this is a contradiction: even Wallerstein's sophisticated model involves a correspondence between strong states and dominant economies. But the Soviet economy cannot match today's capitalist economies. Its political-military strength, however, means that under certain conditions it can exploit them. The danger for Western Europe is not its Sovietization, nor its Finlandization. The danger is Hong-Kongization, i.e., the exploitation (the control of the terms of trade) of an economically advanced Eurasian peninsula by the militarily superior land power. The moral, political, cultural and economic consequences of such an arrangement for Western Europe can be nothing short of disastrous in the long run.

In this sense the unfortunate Gierek, who hoped to break the investment cycle of Soviet-type societies and simultaneously increase investments and real wages by combining cautious technocratic reforms and massive indebtedness to the West, might yet turn out to be the unsung hero of the coming new Soviet developmental strategy — with one decisive difference. Unlike Gierek's clique, the Soviets will have the means to ensure that the funds will be

59. Cf. Paul Piccone and Victor Zaslavsky, "The Socio-Economic Roots of Re-armament," in this issue of *Telos*.

60. The most recent such effort on the independent Left is by the Medvedev brothers. Cf. their "Russia, USA, Western Europe," *New Left Review*, 130 (November-December 1981), pp. 5-22.

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forthcoming for a much longer time — especially if the current campaign for withdrawal of the U.S. from Europe will be successful, and if the balance between both conventional and nuclear forces in Europe itself is not restored or preserved. Military superiority, in this sense, could be their long-term guarantee against troublesome pressures, boycotts, sanctions and human rights policies.

The implications for a Western foreign policy that socialists and democrats should aim for is clear. On a military level, there should be an insistence on finding the lowest possible equilibrium instead of any unilateral moves including illusions of a nuclear-free Europe with Soviet missiles on the other side of the Urals. On the level of trade, its expansion should everywhere be tied to political considerations, as is already the case from the Soviet viewpoint. It is not in the interests of Western Europeans to subsidize precisely the ability of the Soviet Union to maintain its empire intact or to be irreversibly connected for economic reasons to a system that might one day have the power to exploit them. Trade should be made contingent on a development which, however slow, is, in the spirit of the Helsinki accords, away from the consolidation of an imperial system to which Western Europeans otherwise might one day have to surrender a piece of *their* sovereignty, perhaps with consequences analogous to the ones the Poles have recently experienced. In this sense, the slightly paraphrased slogan of the 19th-century Polish revolutionaries remains as true today as then: the democratic movement in Poland has indeed the right to demand that we act on behalf of "their freedom and ours."


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# THE BREAKDOWN OF THE 1960S POLICY SYNTHESIS

## by Hyman P. Minsky

A Keynesian-Rooseveltian policy synthesis for the United States ruled from the end of World War II to the inauguration of Reagan. It emerged out of the union of the structural reforms of the 1930s and the active use of fiscal policy in the post-World War II period. This policy regime was a response to the shortcomings of the small government, laissez-faire capitalism that were apparent in the performance of the economy in the 1920s and early 1930s, and to Keynes' demonstration in *The General Theory* that any economy with the production and financial characteristics of American capitalism was inherently flawed. That is the policy synthesis that ruled for 35 years (1946-1980) was based on what happened between 1920 and 1933 in the advanced capitalist economies and on an economic theory that made business cycles a normal result of the structure of production, the sources and uses of cash and the financial system of an advanced capitalist economy.

However the Keynesian theory that made depressions normal results of the economic process also indicated that 1929-33 was not inevitable; regulation and apt fiscal intervention could much improve the performance of the economy. This vision of American capitalism, as an inherently flawed system which required regulation and fiscal intervention if it were to function well, faded as the economy experienced its prolonged era of success after 1946. Furthermore, over the years 1946-80 the economic analysis that guides the policy advisors and that informs American opinion became neoclassical and apologetic for, rather than Keynesian and critical of, American capitalism. As the neo-classical synthesis of Samuelson, Friedman *et al.* became the dominant frame of reference for the policy advising economists, the reasons for intervention, in the form of market regulations, taxation to reduce savings coefficients, and government big enough to run serious deficits, were lost. Over the last 35 years, neither the performance of the economy nor the dominant economic theory made the flaws of market capitalism evident, even as a chorus of academic economists identified the "unregulated" result of market capitalism with the abstract entities of their theory. Economic theory in the hands of current practitioners is poverty stricken in what it contemplates as possible. Within the current theory, as exemplified by the economics of the rational expectations and the orthodox Keynesian economists, the serious business cycles of history, with their debt deflation processes, just cannot happen.

Without system malfunctioning and an economic theory that made malfunctioning on a serious scale a normal intermittent result of market processes, the regime of regulation, government intervention and biting taxes that characterized the Keynesian-Rooseveltian synthesis became a burden without felt benefits. Any economic or social system that imposes costs without delivering benefits loses its legitimacy. The Reagan administration's smashing victory in the summer of 1981 in changing the economic structure

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almost by fiat reflected the weakness of the rationale for the system that was in place when they took power, rather than the strength of the arguments for radical changes. It is one of the ironies and paradoxes of American politics that the classes and regions that benefitted most from the institutional reforms and policy interventions of the Keynesian-Rooseveltian synthesis became the pillars of the reaction against the synthesis (Texas and Arizona were poor in the 1920s and destitute in the 1930s) whereas the "liberal synthesis" retained support in the middle west and north east (which were the heart of American industrial strength and affluence in the 1920s).

The weakness of the theoretical understanding of the American economy by American policy makers is shown by the intellectually bankrupt political defense of the inherited economic structure put forth in 1981; this defense largely emphasized "compassion." The much stronger argument, to the effect that the performance of the economy in the years of the interventionist state was much superior to that achieved in the prior era of free market capitalism, was not advanced. One reason why "liberalism" did not advance cogent arguments defending big government interventionist policy regimes was that the economic analysis, used by the defenders of interventionist welfare capitalism, is not able to show that an interventionist capitalism is superior to a "free market" capitalism. This failure occurred because the "liberal" economists of the policy advisory establishment accepted pre-Keynesian economic theory as the apt way to structure the analysis of American capitalism.

Staying within the confines of capitalism (i.e., assuming that whatever program of social and economic reform, however radical in intent, is adopted will take the form of incremental changes of a "reasonably well functioning" system) big government capitalism is superior to small government capitalism for an economy that uses expensive and special purpose capital assets and has a sophisticated, complex and innovative financial structure. This is so because the large government deficits that big government capitalism can generate guarantee that gross capital income cannot collapse. As long as gross capital income — in the aggregate — is large enough to enable business on the whole to meet the commitments that are embodied in liabilities, then the wholesale, across the board deflation of asset values and capital asset prices along with a collapse of income, employment and prices, such as occurred in 1929-33, cannot occur.

In a big government interventionist capitalism, the financial system will experience from time to time local shocks and disruptions. This can be sufficient to induce a shift to liability or balance sheet conservatism, which in turn will induce a decline in investment, income and profits. However, if profits are maintained, this shift of what Keynes called liquidity preference is transitory. If government is big, so that the swings in the government deficit (either because of built-in stabilizers or because of discretionary fiscal intervention) are big enough to offset or more than offset swings in investment and the trade balance, then profits will be maintained. With profits maintained, a recession cannot escalate to a deep and long-lasting depression.

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For completeness' sake, it is necessary to add that the central banks of advanced capitalist economies also play a part in preventing deep depressions. To do this they need to actively intervene as lenders of last resort whenever the combination of liability structures, financing charges and the flow of profits leads to a crisis in financial markets. The intervention takes the form of refinancing threatened financial institutions or markets on concessionary terms. Such refinancing increases the ability of banks to finance activity and confers respectability and protection to some extra-bank financial practices.

The result of the combined use of deficits and central bank refinancing of disrupted financial markets has been that the thrust towards a deep depression, that is a normal functioning reaction in a capitalist environment to financial difficulties, has been transformed into the peculiar behavior known as stagflation: slow growth, rising unemployment rates and stepwise increasing but not runaway inflation rates. In comparison to the first 21 years after World War II (1946-66), the last 15 years (1967-81) have been disappointing; in comparison to the 21 years that preceded 1939, the last 15 years have been quite successful.

Incidentally, the welfare state (social security, unemployment insurance, aid to families with dependent children, etc.), together with a tax system where current revenues are sensitive to fluctuations in income and employment, can be interpreted as a set of conservative instruments for assuring an increase in government deficits whenever private investment demand falters; such deficits sustain profits. The welfare state is good for capitalists. It is not especially good for the direct recipients of benefits. This is especially true if the welfare state is seen as a substitute for a full employment policy and the innovative extra market, extra private enterprise production and employment schemes that are necessary if full employment is to be achieved and sustained. After all, welfare — and even devices like old age pensions — can be best interpreted as ways to blame the poor rather than the economy for poverty.

This repudiation in 1981 of the Roosevelt-Keynesian policy synthesis took place in spite of its success in achieving the objectives set for reform in the 1930s. The major objective of Roosevelt's era of reforms was to achieve a variety of capitalism in which Great Depressions cannot occur. To paraphrase Keynes, the objective was to achieve a closer approximation to full employment on a sustained basis than had hitherto been achieved. A second objective was to ameliorate poverty, both urban and rural. Both objectives were achieved and sustained over 1946-1980.

It is important to note that the Roosevelt era of reform and innovation with respect to the economic structure occurred before Keynes' *General Theory* appeared. Thus the structure that was built, mainly between 1933 and 1936, did not benefit from a Keynesian diagnosis of the flaws of capitalism. The Rooseveltian policy structure was not aimed at overriding the flaws of capitalism (which, in Keynes' diagnosis were largely due to the way in which capital asset prices and investment are related to financing and through the banks to money) by fiscal policy measures.

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The reforms of the economic structures during the Roosevelt era were largely structural. They reflected the belief that the Great Depression was largely caused by the downside flexibility of price and imperfections together with fraud in the financial system. The imperfections of the financial system were in part structural but in addition it was argued that the financial and corporate systems gave opportunities for malefactors of great wealth. Thus the New Deal industrial reforms set minimum wages, supported agricultural prices, encouraged trade unions and tolerated cartelization with government participation (regulation in today's "language") in the belief that these structures would constrain the downside flexibility of prices. The reforms of the financial system reflected the views that fraud and the failure of the Federal Reserve to be an effective lender of last resort led to the breakdown of the financial system. These views were translated into laws and regulations that attempted to protect against fraud and to assure that lender of last resort interventions would occur when needed.

Because of the breakdown of the financial system and the weakness of asset values, a class of impoverished mature and older adults of middle class origin emerged in the 1930s. The "inability" of private schemes and personal savings to provide for old age and some other contingencies seemed to be a "self-evident" truth for an economy that periodically had big depressions and sharp falls (even unto zero) of asset value. These self-evident truths led to "populist" political movements (Long, Townsend, Caughlin are names of leaders) that emphasized old age pensions. The social security system was a defensive response to these pressures.

Fundamentally transfer payments, as exemplified by the social security system, were of secondary importance during the New Deal days. In Roosevelt's view, transfer payments, such as relief, were transitory devices made necessary by the emergency. The major income maintenance schemes were "work oriented"; work relief was preferred to direct relief.

An ideological underpinning of the Roosevelt program was the view that the state has a responsibility to guarantee that income from work was available to all and that the only way this guarantee could be affected is if the government had "open ended" employment efforts. This commitment to managing markets and creating institutions so that a "minimal" income from work was available to all stands in sharp contrast to the transfer payment emphasis that became fully dominant with the great society of Johnson and his war on poverty. The poor and the aged as a permanent class of "remittance men" became the basis of American liberalism and radicalism in the Kennedy-Johnson days. The Great Society and the war on poverty were conservative responses to the employment and distribution failures of capitalism. They were based upon compassion rather than an understanding of the determinants of income distribution and employment.

Aspects of the Johnson-Nixon economic regime were internally contradictory. The program emphasized both an improvement of the lot of the "poor" through transfer payments and the subsidization of investment through tax benefits. If the economy is going to simultaneously improve the lot of the "welfare poor" and increase the portion of output that goes to

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investment then the consumption standards of the working-wage earning population must decrease. But part of the working-wage earning population is protected by strong trade unions and another part by their scarce skills in the high technology part of the economy. The end result of these social and political forces is that the lot of the poor could be improved only by a deterioration in the lot of the near poor. The behavior of the real take-home pay of the American "blue collar workers" in the past 15 years shows the divisive character of an exploding welfare-transfer payment system in the context of a commitment to growth through investment.

Transfer payment schemes in the United States always have "eligibility" requirements which set conditions for recipients to satisfy to receive "benefits." Eligibility means that administration is necessary. Often quite arbitrary lines are drawn between those eligible and those ineligible. The end result is that schemes become increasingly complex and difficult to administer. "Inefficient" universal schemes, in the sense that they deliver significant sums to not necessarily "deserving," may be more efficient than "efficient" schemes which deliver benefits to clearly defined targets, if the "inefficient" scheme is cheaper to administer and felt to be fair. A universal children's allowance, for example, may be "inefficient" in that the children of the "rich" receive benefits, even as it is "efficient" because it is much less costly to social harmony than aid to families of dependents that is both means tested and viewed as being unfair.

One of the characteristics of the hurry-up reforms of the Johnson era in the United States was that administrative complexity was not taken to be a problem. Much of funds that are allocated to housing, urban renewal, health and environmental protection involve complex time-consuming and often demeaning negotiations with authority, in the form of dispensing civil servants, by potential recipients. Any successful program of reform and reconstruction must be simple to administer.

There are about as many answers to the question of "What is Keynesian economics?" as there are economists who seriously address the question. In the Anglo-American tradition answers to the question fall into two main camps. One camp takes Keynesian economics as a special case of the Walrasism General Equilibrium Theory. This main Keynesian tradition also holds that the more conservative monetarist school is a special case of the same Walrasism General Equilibrium Theory. In this view, the difference between the two schools comes down to specifications of reactions to changes in a common analytical framework which normally is the IS-LM scheme of J.R. Hicks.

The view that Keynesian economics is a special application of the General Equilibrium Theory of Walras means that the fundamental view of the economy is that the system out there in the world is an "equilibrium seeking and sustaining mechanism." Disruption of equilibrium must come from outside the economic mechanism — either from government, the monetary system or entrepreneurial innovators. In the visions of the orthodox Keynesians and Monetarists there are no endogenous disequilibrating forces

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within the economy that can "cumulate" over time so that by internal economic processes equilibrium is ruptured. Although some economists who live in the overall framework of this neo-classical synthesis favor interventionist policies, the true flavor of the neo-classical synthesis is captured by the "rational expectations economists" who essentially argue that policy and intervention are not capable of altering the "natural rate of unemployment" or "the real wage" except as policy intervenes in particular markets. This result is achieved by working with a model in which very little can happen. In particular, financial crises and, with financial crisis, the possibility of a Great Depression are non-events within the neo-classical framework.

The alternative minority views of what Keynes was about are perhaps united only in that they hold that the orthodox version of Keynes, as a set of specifications of functional shapes and market reactions within an analytical framework that is consistent with orthodox price theory is wrong. However there is an emerging consensus among these dissidents that the apt interpretation of Keynes places him squarely in the intellectual tradition of Riccardo and Marx (formalized by Van Neimann and Sraffa). This means that the primary emphasis is on accumulation seen as a social process of extracting a surplus that is allocated to investment. Keynes can be viewed as an extension of Marx that is reduced to an essential analytical economic core and stripped of its pejorative language. Keynes — like Schumpeter — can be considered to be a "Marxist" economist who is conservative and pro-capitalist. (In the light of various asides and Chapter 24 of the *General Theory*, perhaps Keynes can be taken as a guide to a practical socialism-interventionist capitalism that may in fact work much better than any system that is theoretically pure.)

Keynes, standing on the shoulders of both Marx and Marshall and knowledgeable of the ways sophisticated financial markets of advanced capitalist economic work, produced an analysis of capitalism that focused on an accumulation process that is dependent on financing arrangements. Financial arrangements create payment commitments. The theory he developed showed that in a world where complex liability structures and financial intermediates exist, financial crises, debt deflations and deep depression cycles are possible and they will in fact occur from time to time. There is no necessity to posit external shocks or policy errors to explain the existence of cycles: within Keynes' theory, they are normal functioning events.

In Keynes, capitalism is flawed because the accumulation process, taking its full financial ramifications into account, leads from time to time to deep depressions. However, to Keynes, the alternative of a thorough-going planned economy, where decision on the pace and allocation of accumulation and of the use of existing production capacity are planned, is administratively complex; so complex that it cannot be achieved in a democratic society. The socialization of the accumulation process — of investment — but not of the use of productive capacity became to Keynes a path by which the flaws of

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capitalism would be overridden even though they could not be wholly eliminated.

Economists are always aware of the "power" of decentralized markets to generate coherent results in the production and distribution of commodities and services within given production capabilities and some taken as a given distribution of initial resources. The proposition that decentralized markets are capable of yielding coherent results out of complex independent decision-makers is a first and not trivial lesson that economics teaches. Unfortunately, to neo-classical theories, this is the only lesson; they do not go into the second lesson, which is that when the complexities of capital assets, money and finance are added, then any coherence that is achieved by market processes is transitory, for there are inside the system coherence rupturing processes at work. Thus, decentralized markets are useful social instruments once it is recognized that potentially disruptive results have to be avoided by apt interventions and regulations.

The major virtue of decentralized markets is that they require little or no ability to administer by the state. Furthermore, if production and distribution of commodities and services are carried out by means of markets, then excise taxes, subsidies and relatively easy to administer standards can be used to guide production and distribution without a need for the complex administrative structures of a full-blown planned economy. Taxes, subsidies and regulations are devices that enable society to improve the way decentralized markets effect the details of production and distribution even as fiscal policy and the socialization of investment prevent the aggregate malfunctioning that leads to business cycles.

Decentralized markets and decentralized decisions to produce can and do do a good enough job for the multitude of unimportant details of the economy. Decentralized markets do a poor job of distributing income and because of the instability of the investment process, decentralized market economies with modern capitalist finance are prone to serious depressions. Even the perpetuation of poverty in the midst of overwhelming capacity to produce plenty is due to the impoverishing effects of depressions. The success of the advanced capitalist countries in ameliorating poverty over the 35 years since World War II is due to the absence of a deep depression rather than to the welfare state-transfer payment schemes that have proliferated.

In Keynes' view, the first priority of policy is to tame or socialize the investment process. The economist's "model" of socialism — the Lange-Lerner solution to the problem of allocation and pricing under socialism — clearly separates the utilization of existing resources from the creation of resources. In Lange-Lerner market socialism, producers using given resources are to produce to maximize profit, given market-determined prices. The market is the socialist device for coordinating production with a minimum of bureaucracy.

In the Lange-Lerner model, the role of planning is to determine the pace and the direction of investment. For minor investment decisions — particularly for farms and small-scale enterprise — a socialist banking system

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will function more or less like the banking system now does in providing finance for feasible projects. It is a practical rather than an ideological question as to whether smaller scale enterprise would be privately, cooperatively or publicly owned. Even if public ownership is the chosen path for some parts of the economy, the precepts of Lange-Lerner socialism indicate that units must not be protected from competition. Decentralized markets have a virtue in that they allow for selection and evaluation through competition. One of the apparent weaknesses of interventionist economies is that they get frozen into a particular set of interventions — whether it be collective farms, aid to families with dependent children, or protected, nationalized railways.

The "Sloan" prototype organization of General Motors, in which a finance committee determines the major plant, plant-expanding and lines of business investment decisions and how investment and capital assets are to be financed, whereas various product-line managers produce with the resources placed at their command, is an analogue to the Lange-Lerner division between the market-determined and planned faces of socialism.

A regular steady growth of investment, without inflations or depressions, can only be achieved if today's investment decisions are cut off from today's profitability of business and if the total of financed investment, government spending, and private consumption demands is constrained to available output at existing prices. Lange-Lerner socialism can be interpreted as a way of socializing investment so as to get around the instability of capitalism that Keynes identified as the critical and essential flaw of capitalism. Keynes' theory links this flaw in capitalism to the way capitalist economics determine investment. Lange-Lerner socialism provides for a process that determines investment which does not lead to the same instability of investment and profits that is evident under free market capitalism.

Welfare state capitalism allows for investment to be unstable without an accompanying instability of profits by interposing government deficits. But if government deficits achieved through transfer payments are the profit stabilizer, then a decrease in output accompanied by stabilized profits must lead to prices that contain a higher mark-up on labor costs than was true in the earlier higher output period. In a welfare state, profits are sustained by a process that leads to inflation.

In as much as with a lag, investment leads to output, the sustaining of investment, through either market process or by means of some socialization solution, will be inflationary only in the interval until output increases. An investment strategy for income maintenance implies that inflation will be offset by a flow of output, but this strategy can succeed only if investment and investment financing are largely removed from the market.

One of the theorems of neo-classical theory is that the relative prices of outputs are determined by production possibilities and consumer preferences (technology and tastes). However, in a world with accumulation and government, the mark-up on labor costs in the price of consumer goods reflects the relative strength of investment and government demands in the economy. The relative prices of output — and especially the ratio between a

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price index of consumer goods and a price index of wages — depends on the share of investment and government in total output. Relative prices in any economy reflect the political and social phenomena that determine investment and the size of government. A large investment-large transfer payment system economy will tend to have a real wage that is depressed relative to that of an economy in which income is maintained by employment.

As a result of the evolution of the financial system bewteen 1946 and 1965, the financial system became fragile. As a result, beginning in 1966 there were periodic threats of a financial crisis and thrusts of the economy towards a deep depression. The response of the United States authorities to credit crunches and recessions was to cut taxes, increase transfer payments and use the offices of the Federal Reserve to refinance threatened financial institutions. After 1964 tax cuts were overwhelmingly biased to favor investment and to reduce the "burden" of taxes on the well-to-do (Reagan's reforms are to a large extent a continuation of a trend). The result of these sustaining interventions was that economic growth slowed down, the population dependent on transfer payments increased and the real income of the workers unprotected by strong trade unions began to decline.

The increasing differential between the progress of the real wage of protected and unprotected workers has led to a decline in the power and coverage of trade unions. Today a minority of the industrial labor force in the United States is protected from declining or static real wages by effective trade unions.

In an indirect way, policy that determines the scope of government and the techniques available to finance investment and government spending will determine relative prices and the production techniques that will be used. In any economy, what will be produced and for whom production will take place reflects social and political conditions. The notion of an impersonal market that makes consumer sovereignty the effective determinant of what is produced is false. The market is not an independent determinant of values. It is a social artifact that can and should be used to achieve social goals.

On the supply side, the market is most effective when the individual units have no market power. The entire apparatus of conglomerate firms, in the form of finances, advertising, marketing and the use of expensive special purpose capital assets in production, is designed to achieve protected market positions, i.e., market power. Market power leads to production inefficiencies and distributional injustice.

A problem that the economic reconstruction that will follow the debacle the Reagan program is facilitating will have to face is how to organize those productions that, because of the nature of the capital assets and the scale of production, will only be financed if the units engaged in these productions have market power. The Sloan structure for organizing giant corporations indicates that control over the "finance committee" of giant corporations is the path to a decentralized socialism (or alternatively to a guided interventionist capitalism, the label is of little importance). In this structure the exploitative and inefficient aspects of market capitalism that depend upon private market powers are eliminated, even as the instability due to

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private ownership, investment planning and financing are much attenuated by the socialization of investment.

In thinking about and in hammering out the contours of an economic program for life after Reagan and Thatcher, we would do well to go back to the square zero of the policy synthesis that I called Roosevelt-Keynes for the United States. It is necessary to reconsider the details of the inherited structure in the light of experience and of our current understanding of how our complex economy works. The structural reforms that gave the United States big government interventionist capitalism were largely in place before Keynes' *General Theory* appeared. As a result, the post-war fiscal policy interventions took place in an institutional environment that had been constructed on the assumption that institutional rigidities rather than aggregate demand management was to sustain income, employment and profits.

Keynes' solution to the instability of capitalism was to socialize investment. In a private enterprise economy, one of the major effects of investment is to generate (force) profits. The analysis of Keynes and Kalecki leads to the view that government deficits also generate (force) profits. A big government, where government is big because of transfer payment schemes and national defense, is just as good in generating profits as a government whose "investment" expenditures are big because investment in particular types of capital intensive activities has been socialized. However, profits that are sustained by transfer payment and defense spending are not associated with increases in productive capacity whereas profits that are generated because of government financed productive investments do leave a permanent residual of productive capacity and therefore potential output.

Thus a post-Reagan reform of the American economy that aims not at perfection but to do better than the performance between 1966-81 could begin by reorganizing the basic urban and rail transportation networks so that investment in these facilities are both removed from the private domain and are adequately funded. Any post-Reagan reform must look to the substitution of by-right children's allowance for today's means-tested tax rebates and welfare schemes. But most important, a "by-right" program of public employment in useful projects must become the pillar of the policy.

How to achieve full employment within the context of decentralized markets without using transfer payments to "pump up" demand, even as they do not increase supply, so that inflation results, is the critical policy problem of capitalism and mixed economies. Instead of throwing interventionist capitalism out, as Reagan is doing, it would be far better to recognize that the interventionist capitalism of 1946-81 was far superior to what preceded it and strive to improve the workings of the interventionist system rather than to dismantle it. One must fear that if intervention is dismantled, American capitalism and the other advanced economies will repeat the "dismal" performance of 1929-1933.

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# SPACE, TIME, AND MODERN CULTURE

## by David Gross

One of the most significant developments of this century — a development that has affected all of us whether we are aware of it or not — is the easy and practically universal acceptance of what might be called *the spatialization of thought and experience*. Because we are so much in the middle of this phenomenon, few have noticed it. Most *live* this spatialization as if it were entirely normal. But historically speaking, it has not been the norm. The fact that it is now a "given" which almost no one questions has had important consequences for all aspects of contemporary life.

By the spatialization of thought and experience I mean the tendency to condense time relations — which are an essential ingredient for personal and social meaning — into space relations. Nearly everything that should be understood through categories of continuity and duration is now approached through categories of space and measurement. One whole dimension of life is not only being defined in terms of another, but is being reduced to it. Hence, vertical relations are made to collapse into horizontal ones, and this in turn is causing a radical narrowing of perception and experience on a scale we may still be just barely able to comprehend.

### I

In order to put in context and clarify the enormity of the problem this development presents, a few words need to be said by way of background.

Since the beginning of the modern era, philosophers and scientists have argued that time and space are indispensable categories for comprehending both the world itself and one's place in it. To Descartes, for example, the essence of matter was said to be extension, which exists in space. But matter appears to have duration as well. It seems to persist from one moment to another, and hence to exist in another dimension: that of time. Of these two, the dimension of space was easier to deal with because it was measurable and quantifiable. Time, however, presented a problem for Descartes, since he could not adequately explain how a thing endures through successive instants. He denied that a thing could *will* its own duration, and yet the fact that matter persists in time was undeniable. The only recourse was to fall back upon divine explanation. God, Descartes argued, connects discontinuous instants and gives them continuity. He makes succession possible by himself enduring, remaining continuous. In any event, thanks to Descartes, the categories of space and time were brought into the center of philosophical discussion. Newton accomplished the same for science in the 17th century. In his *Principia* he asserted that space and time are absolute, self-sufficient forms that are actually present in the world as realities in their own right. They exist before and apart from whatever may later fill space and time, just

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as God existed before matter appeared. For Newton, Absolute Space and Absolute Time are infinite, non-relational categories that precede and are independent of both objects and human perceptions. It was on these notions that he grounded some of his most important scientific work. Leibniz also affirmed space and time as fundamental categories, but for him they do not exist prior to or apart from the things which they categorize. Rather, they are derivative of and thus relative to the monads contained "in" space and time. In other words, space and time are mutually co-ordinated "relations"; they are dispositions that exist between phenomena, not fixed receptacles for things to fit into.

More than Leibniz, Kant has been credited with thoroughly revolutionizing the concepts of space and time. Though he kept both as primary categories, he displaced them inwardly and made them *qualities of mind*. Space and time, Kant argued, are not "out there" in the world, either as absolute realities or as relations between things. Instead, they have to be understood as modes of perception, *a priori* categories of the mind — or, as he put it, "pure forms of sensible intuition."[1] All objects are seen *by us* as spatial and as part of some temporal sequence. But things are not really and objectively related to one another in space and time. We only experience them as related. Space and time are actually subjective forms of apprehension that come into being "in the encounter between men and things *as* men meet, relate, use, and specify things."[2] With Kant the Newtonian conception of space and time was completely internalized. Both were still preserved as two separate and requisite categories for understanding things, or the "appearance" of things, in the world. But they were turned into "subjective conditions of thought," not pre-existent properties within, in between, or around things.

Hegel continued this interest in space-time relations, which by the beginning of the 19th century had become a central concern of German philosophy in particular. Space and time were perhaps the two most essential elements in the entire Hegelian system, and both implied and necessarily complemented the other. For Hegel, the Idea objectified itself in two dimensions: in space (as Nature) and in time (as History). Nature was the Idea in an inert state, petrified and frozen in matter. Spirit, on the other hand, was the Idea as self-consciousness moving through time. Its task was to liberate the spiritual content of matter so that a point could be reached in which space and time, matter and spirit, would become one: the ultimate reconciliation of the Idea with itself. Schelling, in his Transcendental Philosophy, also dwelt at length on the categories of space and time, and so did his contemporary Schopenhauer. For the latter, space and time were viewed as mutually interdependent forms of perception that allow us to situate everything there is along intersecting lines of succession and position.[3]

1. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* trans. Norman Kemp Smith (London, 1961), p. 67.
2. Charles M. Sherover, *Heidegger, Kant, and Time* (Bloomington, Ind., 1971), p. 51.
3. See Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, I, trans. E.F.J. Payne (New York, 1958), p. 34. Schelling sometimes took this position, too. See F.W.J. Schelling,

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They "reciprocally determine" one another, which means that both are essential if we are to locate anything, or perceive changes over time. In *The World as Will and Representation* the point is made repeatedly that without these two essential categories we would be unable to grasp duration, simultaneity or causation.

Enough has been said to indicate that by the beginning of the 19th century space and time had become pivotal concepts in European philosophy. However, about this time a question began to be raised concerning the relative importance of each. Is it possible, it was asked, that one category is superior to the other? Does one appear before the other as, say, time before space? Or could it be that one is so all-encompassing that it embraces the other, as space might be said to embrace time? To these questions one interesting answer was often given, namely, that time is the dimension that must be given priority over space, since it is the intrinsically superior category.

This answer seems to emerge more and more clearly as one moves from the mid-17th century to the early 19th century. For Descartes and Newton, space and time were equal and independent but completely non-analogous dimensions. The notion that one might be "superior" to the other was inconceivable; it was an issue that was never even raised. Writing somewhat later, Leibniz, it is true, made space and time interdependent relations rather than fixed properties of the universe. But for him they were still virtually incomparable entities, wholly unlike one another. It would have been impossible for Leibniz to affix values to either by defining one as higher or lower, superior or inferior, to the other. By the time of Kant and Hegel, however, this reluctance to comparatively evaluate each dimension began to change. In his *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) Kant argued that time, not space, is the true ground of all possible experience. Everything that exists does so in a temporal context and is fulfilled, or not fulfilled, in time. Consequently, time is the crucial, indispensable element that must be considered first. It necessarily takes precedence over space because it is a more inclusive category; whereas some things do not have a spatial dimension, all things must exist in time. Temporal sequence, then, and not spatial extension, is the primary means of structuring the human world. Or as Kant put it: "Time is [the] *a priori* condition of all appearance whatsoever."[4] Hegel followed up on this notion by similarly agreeing that everything, including Nature, exists in time, so time must be judged the superior category. Moreover, the *Weltgeist* develops itself by means of a temporal process. It is in time that creative tensions and contradictions develop which propel the World Spirit onward, eventually making fulfillment of the Idea possible. History (time) ultimately redeemds Nature (space) by drawing out its latent spirituality. Time is therefore the active, willful principle, whereas space is essentially passive. Hence, for Hegel, what is durational represents a

*System des transzendentalen Idealismus* (Hamburg, 1957), pp. 134-136. At other times he tended to juxtapose space and time, making them contraries more than coordinates, since each was said to negate the essential qualities of the other.

4. Kant, *op.cit.*, p. 77.-

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more advanced principle than what is merely spatial. Whereas space is static, abstract, and "lifeless," time is qualitative movement; it is "the sheer restlessness of life" which makes growth and differentiation possible.[5] Between these two sets of qualities there was no doubt in Hegel's mind which was the more important.

This is where matters stood at the time of Hegel's death. Space and time were considered essential concepts for understanding human experience. But if a judgment had to be made, time was clearly viewed as a more fundamental category than space. What existed at this point was something closer to the temporalization of space rather than the spatialization of time.

## II

By the end of the 19th century, however, things began to be turned the other way around. Now some individuals began to argue (with despair rather than relish) that perhaps space was the dominant category after all. It seemed to them that the most glaring fact of modern life was the almost universal subordination of time relations to space relations, and this to the great detriment of human wholeness and creativity. Bergson may have been the chief spokesman for this re-interpretation. In his *Essay sur les données immédiates de la conscience* (1889) and his subsequent *Matière et Mémoire* (1896), he outlined in detail his views on space and time. His position might be briefly summarized as follows:

The "true reality" of the world and of our consciousness, which we have a responsibility to get in touch with, is pure flow, pure *durée*. This fluid duration cannot be broken up, measured, categorized, or "artificially decomposed." It is an indivisible continuity. It is overflowing, expanding, moving *life* which is impervious to analysis, to the immobilizing (spatial) categories of the intellect. The mind, however, in attempting to approach this profound reality, utilizes categories of understanding rather than feeling in order to comprehend it. It therefore invades the vital realm of *durée* with foreign tools of analysis and ratiocination, thereby misrepresenting the real nature of the flow. Consequently, the intellect inevitably reduces duration to extension, succession to simultaneity, the continuous stream of life to separate, discrete units measurable by number and space. For Bergson, the mind is by definition spatially oriented. But everything creative, expansive and teeming with energy *is not*. Hence, the intellect can never help us reach what is essential because it kills and fragments all that it touches. But there is a capacity present within us — namely, intuition — which will allow us to reach *durée* again. We must, Bergson concluded, break out of the spatialization imposed by mind in order to regain contact with the core of the truly living, which subsists only in the time dimension (that is, in pure duration).[6]

Now Bergson articulated these ideas within a very limited framework. His

5. G.W.F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. J.B. Baillie (New York, 1967), pp. 103-104.

6. See Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, trans. F.L. Pogson (New York, 1960), pp. 75-139; and *Matter and Memory*, trans. Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer (London,

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work, especially *Matière et Mémoire*, is extremely narrow and technical; it hardly ever descends from the rarefied air of 19th-century philosophy and psychology. Even with his notion that the dimension of time is being collapsed into the dimension of space, Bergson never ventured outside the realm of consciousness and perception. He made no commentary whatsoever on society, never seeing the larger context of what he discussed. All he said was simply designed to attack the fragmenting intellect by pointing out its many limitations, to defend intuition as a superior method for reaching the source of what is essential in life, and to save the "spiritual" side of existence (associated with *durée*) from the materialization of experience resulting from exclusively spatial categories of thought.

Others, following Bergson, hit upon the possibility of applying his ideas to a wider range of material. In the 1920s, for example, Minkowski began using Bergsonian concepts in his analysis of schizophrenia. One of the characteristics of schizophrenics, he found, was their tendency to reduce time to space: to spatialize everything that should be perceived as durational and continuous, including their own lives. According to Minkowski, this reduction occurs because schizophrenics "lose vital contact with reality" — exactly Bergson's phrase (with "reality" being *durée*) but now turned toward the treatment of the mentally ill. Schizophrenics were characterized by Minkowski as individuals who are locked into static experience or "lived synchronism." They feel no motion, no progression, no continuity, no time — or if they do experience time it is serial time, conceived as a straight line along a horizontal plane, and hence assimilated into space.[7] Spatialization, then, became for Minkowski a symptom of sickness — a point Bergson never explicitly made. Some of Minkowski's successors — such as Gisele Pankow, Hubert Tellenbach and V. Gebsattel — have carried this work forward. For them, health means restoring to patients a sense of time, and a sense of *being in* time,. in other words, restoring the lost dimension of temporalization.[8]

Lukacs also adopted some of Bergson's concepts in the 1920s, but he significantly reworked them and turned them in a direction entirely different than Minkowski's. With Lukacs, the spatialization of time was addressed as an obvious fact of life in the 20th century. But, unlike Bergson, Lukacs explained this fact by recourse to cultural and historical explanations rather than philosophical argument or psychological data. Spatialization had occurred not because the intellect is unfortunately a spatializing medium, but because of *the nature and structure of social life under capitalism.* (This, in

1962), pp. 233-298. Bergson does admit that the rational intellect (especially in science) deals with the time element, but only by converting it into a *series*, which still keeps time subordinate to space. Pure *durée* is a succession which is nevertheless the opposite of a series of discrete states. See *Time and Free Will*, pp. 91ff.

7. See Eugène Minkowski, *Lived Time*, trans. Nancy Metzel (Evanson, Ill., 1970); *La Schizophrénie* (Paris, 1927); and "Bergson's Conceptions as Applied to Psychopathology," *Journal of Nervous and Mental Diseases,* LXIII (1926), No. 6, pp. 553-568.

8. See the discussion of Pankow, Tellenbach, and Gebsattel's work in Joseph Gabel, *False Consciousness*, trans. Margaret A. Thompson (New York, 1975), pp. 184-197, 228-229. Extensive references to their work can be found in Gabel's bibliography.

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its own way, was a notion every bit as radical as Kant's "Copernican Revolution" 150 years earlier, where time and space were internalized and made into *a priori* forms of apperception instead of objective properties in the world.) In *History and Class Consciousness* (1923), Lukacs asserted that it is the historically specific capitalist relations of production that cause "time [to shed] its qualitative, variable, flowing nature." As a result, time itself necessarily "freezes into an exactly delimited, quantifiable continuum filled with quantifiable 'things': . . . in short, it becomes space."[9] More than this, Lukacs related the spatialization of the world to particular bourgeois modes of thought and action (e.g., commodification), and gave the task of recovering *durée* — that is, history — to the proletariat. For Lukacs, proletarian class consciousness *is* the recovery of process, history, continuity; it is a recovery therefore of the mission and destiny which the working class could easily lose sight of in the midst of the spatialization encouraged by the ruling classes. What restores this feeling for duration is not reflection, not even Bergsonian intuition, but *praxis*, the deed. For Bergson's key term — "loss of vital contact with reality" — Lukacs substituted another: "loss of *praxis*." By saying that it is the absence of radical practice that makes spatialization possible, Lukacs in effect socialized and concretized what he picked up from Bergson. Praxis now became for Lukacs the touchstone for the recovery of those qualities now being lost under (bourgeois) spatialization, for it is practice that draws out, and brings to maturity, all that is immanent in history. Moreover, praxis breaks through and transcends existing rigid forms because it grasps what is *in process* underneath them, and therefore what must be realized; it actualizes suppressed tendencies and latencies that would otherwise never come to fruition.[10]

This, at least, is how Lukacs saw it. His major accomplishment was to take the concept of spatialization out of the realm of philosophy and ground it in class and social relations. Yet, despite his hopes that revolution would restore duration, it seems apparent today that neither the proletariat nor any other group in society has halted or even slowed the phenomenon of spatialization. The reasons for its "triumph" are in fact more numerous than either Bergson or Lukacs realized, which is why the causes of the spatialization of existence must be sought elsewhere than *simply* in the rational intellect or in the structure of capitalism. Furthermore, the ramifications of spatialization have spread much wider and gone much deeper than either suspected. Not just time is being spatialized now, but whole realms of thought and experience irrespective of one's class position. It is in the "lived world" of everyday life that the effects of spatialization are most firmly entrenched, and perhaps most insidious, because it is here that they are first accepted and reproduced (for the most part unconsciously).

9. Georg Lukacs, *History and Class Consciousness,* trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), p. 90.

10. Praxis could be said not only to restore temporalization, but to resurrect the lost "silences" of the past — again something that spatialization tends to erase and cause to be forgotten. See Frederic Jameson, "Marxism and Historicism," *New Literary History,* XI:1 (1979), p. 57.

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## III

What I want to argue here is that spatialization has now become our basic modality for organizing and structuring the world. It amounts to something like a *mentalité*, affecting the minutest areas of thought and perception.[11] An exact account of how this came about would be difficult to construct since it is hard to distinguish the "causes" of spatialization from its "symptoms." In retrospect, both seem to have appeared simultaneously, affirming and reinforcing each other. Nevertheless, one can go beyond Bergson and Lukacs in pointing out some historical reasons why spatialization has come to replace temporalization as the dominant mode of experience.

One is certainly the reality of urbanization during the last 100 years. City life undoubtedly calls for sharpness in spatial over temporal relations, just as it demands rapid sensory responses and the blasé attitude.[12] Whereas nature in the countryside is continuous, in the city it is broken up into geometric, organized space; within the metropolis people inhabit a world that is mostly experienced spatially. The other side of the growth of cities has been the steady dissolution of organic communities that once preserved the sense of a time continuum through custom and tradition. One might also say that in the past few decades there has been a notable weakening of class consciousness, and in this connection Lukacs may be right in suggesting that without an awareness of class location it is difficult to grasp the present moment *in continuity,* as part of a historical process. As Jean Domarchi succinctly put it: "Class consciousenss is above all a consciousness of time."[13]

Another cause of spatialization may be the enormous expansion of technology and technological modes of thinking in the 20th century. By its very nature technology encourages the conversion of time factors to numbers and qualitative indices to quantitative ones. A good example of this (besides the obvious one of computers) is the time-motion research that became so important at the beginning of the century — at exactly the time when Bergson and the young Lukacs were lamenting the loss of a temporal dimension. The numerous and influential studies by Frederick Winslow Taylor, Frank and Lilian Gilbreth, and others sought ways scientifically to reduce time to space by dissecting every moment of duration into separate phases. "We divide a process into operations, and these into cycles of motions, and these into elements of motions," wrote Lilian Gilbreth in one of her many works that popularized these procedures — this particular one entitled *The Homemaker and Her Job.*[14] Thanks also to the timely invention of the chronocyclegraph around 1918 — a device that mechanically converts time

11. Gabel labels this false consciousness, which means for him "the preponderance of the spatial element in relation to the temporal element in the perception of the world." Gabel, *op.cit.*, p. xxi. This book contains a number of ideas which I have expanded in this essay.

12. See Georg Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life," *The Sociology of Georg Simmel,* Kurt H. Wolff, ed. (New York, 1964), pp. 409-424.

13. Jean Domarchi, "Matérialisme dialectique et conscience de classe," *Esprit,* May-June 1948, p. 824.

14. Lilian M. Gilbreth, *The Homemaker and Her Job* (New York, 1927), p. 113. In this typical work, Gilbreth advises the housewife on how to spatialize her time.

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into motion and then transfers it to a process chart — micro-motion study became possible, allowing time to be reproduced graphically and thereby spatialized.[15] A similar development occurred in psychology with the ascendancy of Watson and his behaviorist school, for whom only what was measurable really existed. Ironically, Bergson had argued that it is only through inner consciousness that one reaches *durée*. There is no other path to temporalization except intuition and introspection, for the rational mind merely spatializes. But it was precisely this inner consciousness that Watson, and following him much of modern psychology, has systematically eliminated. As Watson expressed it in his initial defense of behaviorism in 1913: "Psychology must discard references to consciousness."[16]

More recently, television has furthered the general spatialization of experience in modern culture. As a visual medium it functions by condensing time processes into pictorial images, and what cannot be turned into images disappears as information. Moreover, television frequently removes these same images from their time contexts; it is not able to deal very well with sequence, though it has no trouble compressing the sequential into the here and now.[17] All of this may signal something unique to our era, namely, the virtually unchallenged dominance of the optic sense, partly due to the "increase in volume and intensity of visual sights and symbols brought about by technology."[18] Though this has yet to be explored in detail, there may be a close correlation between visualization and spatialization. The more everything is reduced to what the eye can measure (as with behaviorist psychology and time-motion studies), the more time is made subordinate to space.

A final cause of spatialization worth mentioning here is the pervasive influence of the culture industry. It operates by flattening out experience along a horizontal plane that knows no past or future, only simultaneity. The culture industry has a vested interest in its consumer audience forgetting practically everything from one moment to the next. Its goal is to eliminate the vestiges of duration by continually stimulating ever new desires which negate previous ones.[19] At the same time it is implied that these desires can only be satisfied through the purchase and consumption of a long line of ready-made cultural commodities. The obliteration of the past in order to make way for a more rapid turnover of *objets d'art* has by now become a familiar reality. Today almost nothing lasts, or is intended to last, more than a couple of years, and this has naturally had a corrosive effect on both the objective and subjective time consciousness of individuals.

15. See Frank B. Gilbreth, *Motion Study* (New York, 1911).

16. John B. Watson, "Psychology as a Behaviorist Views It," *Psychological Review*, XX (1913), pp. 158-177.

17. For more on this see Jerry Mander, *Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television* (New York, 1978), esp. pp. 192-193.

18. See Jeremy Shapiro, "One-Dimensionality: The Universal Semiotic of Technological Experience," *Critical Interruptions,* ed. Paul Breines (New York, 1970), p. 162.

19. The result is that nothing "remains as of old; everything has to run incessantly, to keep moving." Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment,* trans. John Cummings (New York, 1972), p. 134.

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Far more important than the "causes" of spatialization — and these have only been broadly sketched here — are its consequences for the present. Some of these may be summarized as follows:

*Immediacy.* Spatialization promotes an over-developed sense of immediacy. All that exists for certain is the Now, not a before or after, not continuity or duration. When change does "intrude" upon the present, it seems to come as a catastrophe from the outside, since those who see only what is immediate cannot grasp the stages that have led up to the apparent disasters that continually overtake us. "For anyone who sees things in such immediacy," Lukacs wrote in *History and Class Consciousness,* "every true change must seem incomprehensible."[20] More than this, if nothing is truly real but the frozen instant which is directly experienced, then the things we encounter in everyday life are no more and no less than the sum of what they signal. Their truth is simply their immediacy, their surface manifestations. What is missing in this is any notion of *levels of meaning,* all of which have evolved historically and still remain present underneath the surface. In fact, the most important aspect of things may lie below appearances, and this aspect is composed of historicity, duration, remembrance. To deal only with the immediately experienceable surface of objects is to forget both their temporal dimension and the numerous social relations that have constituted these objects over time, and in effect made them what they have become. Similarly, when spatialization is the dominant mode of perception the instant becomes not a moment anchored in time but a shifting point in space. Horizontal perceptions then replace vertical ones, and where time is dealt with at all it is treated as congealed duration. Under these conditions, existence seems to gather around points in space, as if each moment were independent of every other, or at most related serially but not immanently. Acts also do not appear to be brought about by what precedes them, but each act, like each instant, is treated as its own separate eternity. Again, only that which is immediate and simultaneous is experienced as real. While the notion is entertained that reality can be altered, this usually means the rearrangement of elements exclusively within the spatial field of the present, like pieces of glass in a kaleidoscope. Change comes to mean, then, a spatial, not a temporal, *combinatoire.* The net result of these conceptions (as is obvious today politically) can only be staticness and immobility.

*Identities and Correspondences.* When spatial modes of perception replace temporal ones, there are bound to be repercussions within a culture's prevailing structures of thought. There is plenty of evidence that this is in fact the case today. In the mass media, in education, in the official language of politics and advertising (is there any difference?) one can notice the effects of spatialization not only on what is said but on how it is said, i.e., on how points are argued or connections made. Compared to the last century (when a genetic, historical mode of thought was dominant), we now more easily conceptualize in terms of the similarities between things in space, as opposed

20. Lukacs, *op.cit.,* p. 153.

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to the differences within the same things over time. We see identities and correspondences across a level plane much more readily than we grasp differences through a span of duration. This makes it harder to see or relate to the "otherness" of the past, which has led one historian to speculate that people may be losing even the facility to imagine what is different from, or other than, what exists in the present.[21]

Likewise, logical connections are established (especially in advertising) more by juxtaposition than superposition. In a juxtaposing mode of thought, things are set next to or alongside one another in a spatial medium that makes time irrelevant. In a superpositional mode of thought, things are seen to follow one another since the disappearance of something is required for something else to replace it; even so, every new entity is viewed as emerging out of a previous state of affairs which in some ways is still contained and perpetuated in what has displaced it.[22] In superpositional thought, then, time is carefully taken into account, and continuity is given priority over contiguity. In juxtapositional thought, it is the other way around. One thing is set beside or against another, or one term is seen as necessarily excluding every other. A thing is here or it is not here, it occupies this particular space or it does not occupy it. Thinking by juxtaposition and exclusion produces an entirely different format for conceptualization — a format that is the kind I think predominates today. TV commercials are a case in point. They persuade by juxtaposing objects alongside one another and then demanding a choice that is narrowed to the simple equation: either this or that. *Tertium non datur.* Juxtapositional thought as it is practiced today usually works best by setting up antitheses and antipodes.[23] It therefore dichotomizes whatever it touches, and this misses the richness, flow, and interpenetration that really exist within things. In fact, dichotomies are never actually to be found anywhere in the world, but are only conceived in the mind and applied to things. As Nietzsche expressed it long ago: "There are no antitheses.... If anything indicates our *humanization*... it is to be found in our no longer needing excessive contrasts, indeed, in our dispensing with them altogether."[24]

A spatializing mentality affects the way we conceptualize in other respects as well. For example, today things (and people) are more and more seen in terms of the distances which separate them. And since no two things or no two points can ever occupy the same space, objects can only draw near to or move

21. Christopher Lasch, *The World of Nations: Reflections on American History, Politics and Culture* (New York, 1973), pp. 103-118.

22. Georges Poulet, *Proustian Space,* trans. Elliott Coleman (Baltimore, 1977), pp. 91-92.

23. This does not have to be so. Juxtaposition as such is not necessarily the problem, but only juxtaposition which operates entirely within the spatial field of the present and which is exclusive, i.e., which sees only antinomies in the midst of multiplicity. Juxtaposition would be more than acceptable if an element from the past (hence from the medium of *durée*) were set against an element in the present, and not in a controlled way — in order to put the past to shame — but just the opposite: to upset existing configurations with material that has appeared in time, but which has since been dismissed or repressed.

24. Friedrich Nietzsche, cited in Peter Pütz, "Nietzsche: Art and Intellectual Inquiry," *Nietzsche: Imagery and Thought,* ed. Malcolm Pasley (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1978), pp. 10-11. Nietzsche's italics.

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away from one another. They can never — and this is the anguish today — unite or join together. The essence of desire, and also its futility, is to bridge distances. But in a spatializing framework, distances can never be absolutely bridged. Hence the frustration, especially in love, where convergence is the goal. There must always be a non-identity between the spaces occupied by the loved one and the lover. Moreover, true brotherhood would also be impossible in a spatial conception where at most there might be an assemblage of monadic points but never real solidarity (which is conceivable only through continuity in time).[25] Time is the milieu of true comingling and interaction, space is not. Time creates emotional bonds that link people together as something more than co-existing points in space. The result of thinking only spatially may be personal despair and the loss of a sense of brotherhood (which might partly explain the spatial language of existential psychology, e.g., "emptiness," "vacuity," etc.). On the whole, space is not a "ground of union," not a "communicating milieu," but its opposite — a source of separation.[26]

Another way to express the contemporary effect of spatialization is to expand on a line from Mallarmé: "All words," he wrote "mirror themselves in each other."[27] In spatial thinking, all things mirror other things without having to interpenetrate, engage, or dialogue with one another. The mirror is the perfect image of spatialization because it never takes account of time. It merely reflects, but a reflection can never produce a genuine connection. In a mirror, distances are kept and images are left to reverberate in space. (In this respect, semiotics might be considered the spatial discipline *par excellence* because it studies only how things refer to one another along the same plane, or in the same series of associations, but is indifferent to their sub-surface interrelations.) When mirroring, reflecting, or referring become ascendant ways of organizing thought or positioning things in space, as I think they are now, then other modes tend to be lost sight of, if not systematically excluded. In the present context, this means the disappearance of dialectical forms of thought which view things, and the connections between things, in an entirely different light.

*Non-Historical Consciousness.* As has already been pointed out, spatialization destroys historicizing (or diachronic) approaches to the world of experience and replaces them with structural (or synchronic) ones. The genetic or teleological paradigms of the last century do not fit comfortably in a *société de consommation* such as our own.[28] Hence an interest in how things resemble or parallel one another appears to be superseding the concern with questions of genesis, unfolding, and development. A city like Los Angeles provides a good example of how, in the megalopolis, history, time and

25. "The sense of belonging together," Lukacs wrote in an early work, "is kept alive only by continuity, and once this is destroyed even the past disappears." Georg Lukacs, *Soul and Form*, trans. Anna Bostock (Cambridge, 1974), p. 107.

26. Some of the points in this paragraph have been made superbly by Georges Poulet in *op.cit.*, pp. 42-43.

27. Stéphane Mallarmé, cited in Georges Poulet, *The Interior Distance*, trans. Elliott Coleman (Ann Arbor, 1964), p. 276.

28. Jameson, *op. cit.*, pp. 46, 49.

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tradition either get absurdly reduced or find their traces eliminated altogether (except during centennials and bi-centennials, when the hasty "recall" of the past hopelessly misses the point). Perhaps an even better example is Disneyland, where the past is not only spatialized but "iconically enshrined." Here "history is a shattered landscape in which the individual moves through a world of discontinuities: Mississippi riverboats, medieval castles, and rocket ships equally fill the reality of a single moment."[29] Not accidentally, Frontierland (history, time) has been placed diametrically opposite Tomorrowland, which is time spatialized and "captured by science and technology."[30] The very fact that the past can be successfully reconstructed and (to the spectators) impressively represented is itself meant to be testimony to the superior, spatializing power of technology over time.[31]

Much of modern architecture also shows a great hostility to history. It either (like Le Corbusier and his followers) completely denies the reality of time, including even the architectural past; or if it does "quote" something historical, it effectively nullifies its authenticity by pulling it out of context and spatializing its power of difference. Similarly, in so much official political discourse, the past continually gets flattened when historical facts of great force and resonance are turned into *illustrations* and used to make points wholly foreign to what the facts have meant in time. But since few choose to remember what the facts actually were, almost anyone can get away with it. The same tendency to "presentify," and therefore spatialize, is also blatant in much contemporary journalism, even in *Time*, which, needless to say, is not about historical time at all. The focus on visual immediacy (*Life, People, Us*) makes it difficult to convey a meaningful sense of duration or development. Consequently, spatial information, especially in reportage or the interview format, often takes precedence over temporal information, that is, information based on historical considerations.[32]

Historians themselves are by no means immune to spatialization. A growing number of them have begun proclaiming the uselessness of the past as such, not realizing that its loss would mean a durationless, one-dimensional present where things, meanings, and values could only be cross-referenced horizontally. "Industrial society. . .does not need the past," J.H. Plumb has written. "The new methods, new processes, new forms of living of scientific and industrial society have no sanction in the past and no roots in it."[33] Even structural Marxist historians, in direct contrast to Marx himself, have denied the value of a historical perspective for the analysis of the contemporary situation. As two Althusserian historians recently put it: "The study of history is not only scientifically but also politically valueless. The object of history,

29. William Irwin Thompson, *At the Edge of History: Speculations on the Transformation of Culture* (New York, 1971), p. 12.

30. Louis Marin, "Disneyland: A Degenerate Utopia," *Glyph,* I (1977), p. 61.

31. "The remoteness of exotic places [*Adventureland*] and the American national past [*Frontierland*] become *the universal space-time of science and technology and this universality becomes American.*" Louis Marin, *ibid.,* p. 62. Italics mine.

32. Gabel, *op.cit.,* pp. 113-114.

33. J.H. Plumb, *The Death of the Past* (Boston, 1970), p. 14.

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the past, cannot affect present conditions. Historical events do not exist and can have no material effectivity in the present."[34] Statements such as these are becoming increasingly common as the spatialization of thought grips the minds of historians no less than the rest of the population.

*Order.* Finally, since spatialization freezes time in the moment, it tends to make us treat existing patterns and relations as if they were permanent and universally valid. It literally absolutizes the status quo as it is now constituted, thereby legitimating what is synchronous and discrediting what is non-synchronous. In this respect, spatialization is one of the greatest and apparently most unnoticed forces promoting the order of the Established Order. It stabilizes present conditions in at least two ways. First, it replaces organic (temporal) images of society with spatial models based on cybernetics, closed circuitry, or mosaic patterns, where "change" means not transformation but simply the re-arrangement of tesserae. More and more the perception of things displacing other things, evolving, or transmuting themselves in time is disappearing. If something is not what it should be, it is recircuited or, better yet, replaced: another object is put in the space it once occupied. In the most subtle ways, things as well as individuals are beginning to be dealt with mainly in regard to the space that they occupy. Even the concept of "becoming" is losing its durational aspect. Under the pressure of advertising and the culture industry, becoming is now defined as spreading out and claiming for oneself a greater amount of space, or owning a larger number of things that occupy space. The tremendous amassing of objects that proliferate and stretch themselves out in a spatial dimension is the American experience of consumption. What the cultural critic still needs to explain are the numerous ties between consumption and spatialization, and the extent to which both lock us into the present moment as if that were all there is.

Secondly, spatialization helps stabilize existing relations by, as has been said, obliterating the differences between moments in time and replacing them with similarities between points in space. But a sense of time is one of the things so badly needed in order to see the present in light of all that *is no longer* and all that *has not yet come to be.* Unfortunately, spatialization always kills the feeling for duration that must underlie any vision of what is missing or incomplete. By substituting a fixed for a genuinely fluid perception of the world, it makes it hard to see what is still in process, still waiting to be realized. Though the complete spatialization of experience would not make a critique of life impossible, it would make it different and also much more difficult to achieve.

## IV

In general, it is possible to say that there are two central reasons why spatialization has become the dominant mode through which most people now experience and conceptualize the world.

The first has to do with certain tendencies that appear to be both inherent

34. Barry Hindess and Paul Hirst, *Pre-Capitalist Modes of Production* (London, 1975), p. 312.

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in and necessary to advanced industrial societies (e.g., the expansion of technological rationality, urbanization, bureaucratization, and so forth). Once these processes become established within a society, they seem to unfold according to a logic that by its very nature increases spatialization. It is important to emphasize nonetheless that these tendencies represent only inclinations or predispositions. At most, the growth of spatializing modes of thought and perception are *implicit* in these phenomena. But they are not inevitable; there is no such thing as an intractable law of the increasing spatialization of life. Hypothetically, the inclination toward the spatial over the temporal, though powerful, could be checked and countered by human agency, by the active intervention of groups of people bent on keeping avenues of duration open. Historically speaking, however, though such groups have at times emerged, they were not strong enough or numerous enough to succeed. Consequently all we have known, at least in recent times, has been the history of the advance of spatialization. But it did not need to be this way. It is conceivable that history could have taken a different turn.

The second reason for the ascendancy of spatialization has to do with the specific interests of controlling elites who stake out claims for social domination. Today every ruling group, East or West, socialist or capitalist, feels it can better administer a population if it encourages spatializing over temporal forms of experience. Each grafts its own interests — the interests of those who manage economic power or the machinery of government — onto what are spatializing *inclinations* within modern industrial societies, and they thereby turn mere tendencies into actualities. Because these forces which promote social, political, and technological domination have "won out" in this century, it appears by an inaccurate reading of history (from the viewpoint of the victors) that spatialization was something unavoidable. Again, this may not be so, but it is hard to see that anymore. If the dominant classes fought to regard or reverse the spatializing elements within capitalism (or socialism), it is not improbable that openings of duration, time and remembrance would not be better preserved rather than systematically eliminated, as has turned out to be the case.

Lukacs in *History and Class Consciousness* glimpsed correctly that spatialization is not simply tied to rationalizing modalities of the mind, as Bergson had believed. Instead he argued that it was bound up with social forces, class relations, and particularly with the requirements of commodification and reification which seemed to be inherent in a capitalist economy. From this observation Lukacs concluded that capitalism is also responsible for the evils of spatialization. He failed to notice — and in 1923 perhaps could not yet have been expected to notice — that in its own way socialism, which was supposed to be free from commodification and reification, also accelerated the tendencies toward the spatialization of experience (through its bureaucratic procedures, central planning, reliance on quantifiable and statistical information for decision making, rational control of life processes, etc.). One could say that this happened because

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technologization — and the spatialization that inexorably follows from it — is a law of modern industrial life. But perhaps more than is generally realized a better explanation lies with the interests of the ruling strata who guide both capitalist and socialist societies. If they are concerned with maximizing social domination, and if they believe that spatialization will make this goal easier to achieve, they will of course do what they can to advance spatializing forms of thought and conceptualization.

In any event, Lukacs did not pursue the topic of spatialization beyond a few passing comments. Instead he turned his attention to how duration could be restored through the revolutionary *praxis* of the proletariat. In this way, he let slip the opportunity to investigate the question of *how* spatialization gets embedded in a particular social reality.

From today's perspective it is possible to do this somewhat more accurately than in the 1920s. Spatialization, it now appears, happens not merely because of the nature of capitalism as such — though as I have said there are certainly implicit tendencies in it which push in this direction — but because of the interests of controlling groups which decide the direction capitalism is to go, or what its ideological thrust will be. These groups have some room to maneuver. They can, if they choose, advance or reduce spatialization; they can balance it with durational elements; or, if it is seen to be in their interests, they can accelerate the emphasis on time and history again, though this is highly unlikely, since by now their interests are much too firmly wedded to spatialization to ever try and reverse itself.

This point can be made clearer by pointing out that capitalism has from the beginning displayed an unmistakable hostility toward the dimension of historical time, but how this hostility manifested itself has changed noticeably from one epoch to another.

At first, before the capitalsit class became hegemonic, the attack on the value of *durée* was mainly a challenge, a shrewd tactic used in the war against the aristocracy. The cultural importance of time or history had to be undermined because the aristocracy justified itself as the ruling class precisely on the basis of its relationship to duration. Its social legitimacy depended on remembrance, continuity, custom, and tradition — all facets of a temporal dimension. As hopeful usurpers of power, the bourgeoisie, in the course of the 18th century, challenged each of these values, and by so doing called into question the significance of everything time-bound. To the aristocrat's durational ideologies, the fledgling capitalist class opposed a number of rudimentary spatializing concepts: among them rationality, utility, calculation, "social geometry," abstract natural rights over historical rights or privileges, and the like. But since the bourgeoisie did not yet hold power in most of Europe, these concepts hardly seemed to be instruments of social domination. Rather they appeared to be merely tools of intellectual resistance or ideological warfare.

By the mid-19th century, with capitalists at the helm of most Western economies, the relation to time changed. The hostility toward temporal

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duration remained, but now it took the form of the capitalist wanting to demonstrate his actual superiority over duration by mastering it, not just opposing it on principle. And he "mastered" time by ordering everything that went before according to new taxonomies. Mostly this meant arranging past time into "stages" leading up to the present — *his* present, the period which he now dominated and which he treated as ontologically superior to any other. The stages outlined by Comte and the positivists might be cited as one example of this new codification of time relations, with the *telos* of history concluding in a celebration of the present.

It is important to note, though, that if the 19th-century bourgeois reconstituted the past, *he did not discard it*. The plenitude of previous ages may have been reduced, even made univocal, but the past as such was kept as a cipher, as a way of comparing the putative greatness of the present to something else — namely, to the alleged inferiority of the past. In this manner the past became an enormous curiosity shop, or, better, a historical scrap heap from which things could now and then be drawn, or in comparison to which one's self-satisfaction could be assured.

Capitalism, though certainly arrogant and contemptuous of temporality, still realized that it had come out of duration, that it was part of the historical process; it regarded itself as the culmination of a long but — and this was important — often shabby and inglorious evolution. To be sure, the 19th-century capitalist could admit that he owed his ascendancy to a system that contained, in Marx's words, "relations derived from earlier forms. . .only in an entirely stunted. . .travestied. . .or caricatured form."[35] Yet despite or because of these eclectic origins, the defenders of capitalism tried to veil their antecedents out of embarrassment, almost as if they were ashamed of capitalism's lowly and questionable social pedigree. They would have preferred to give the impression that capitalism sprang, as it were, full grown from the head of Zeus. Though they knew that it was in fact thrown up by, and still indebted to, prior historical forces, they wanted to disguise this reality, and they did so in a particularly clever way: by converting the past which capitalism had transcended into the very symbol of its power and majesty. The past, now subdued, became mute testimony to capitalism's triumph over duration.

One means of showing this superiority was to utilize, and where possible assimilate, what had been surpassed from previous stages of history. *Incorporation is a form of exercising power,* a point that the 19th-century bourgeois realized and carried out with a vengeance. This is clear, for example, in architecture. The sheer joy of incorporating every previous historical style was a testament to its own notions of mastery. Assimilation was a way of expressing pride and power, though of course in the process the subtle connotations each style possessed were effaced. (Kingsley spoke of the Victorian home of Sir John Hartover which was built in 19 different styles "including the Anglo-Saxon, the Norman, the Cinquecento, the Doric, and

35. Karl Marx, *Grundrisse,* trans. Martin Nicolaus (New York, 1973), pp. 105-106.

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the Boeotian, and bearing traces of the Parthenon, the Pavilion at Brighton, and the Taj Mahal at Agara.")[36] This partly explains the monumentality of much 19th-century middle class architecture, including the Greek and Roman goddesses sculpted as caryatids on the exterior of stock exchanges, or portrayed as representatives of Commerce and Industry on the friezes of museums and public buildings. All this represents a reduction of the richness and difference of the past to mere emblems of bourgeois *arrivisme*. Nevertheless, temporality was preserved and drawn upon. It was dismantled but not really "swept away," as Marx implied. At this point, one could not be sure that capitalism would (or would even want to) throw out duration altogether as something unnecessary or useless.

Exactly this did begin to happen around 1900 and after when those guiding and shaping the destiny of capitalism began to assume yet another relation to the dimension of time. Now not incorporation but the *abolition of duration* was stressed and ultimately implemented. Utilizing historical time no longer seemed important, not even for purposes of legitimation, since by now capitalism was starting to legitimize itself on the basis of what it could produce and deliver, not on its relation to or even mastery of the historical process. Capitalism increasingly undertook to demolish anything old, obsolete, or antiquated, including the stages to the present on which it once depended for its sense of status. Architecture, among numerous other cultural phenomena, again reflected this, for this was the age of emerging functionalism, modernism, and the so-called "international style," all of which emphasized efficiency, futuristic design, the use of non-traditional materials, and the destruction of any vestiges from the past. Now spatialization as a social process began to accelerate geometrically rather than arithmetically. The past became not a junkpile to rummage through but the "burial place of historical memories."[37]

In place of stages, now deemed irrelevant, capitalism mapped out purely spatial relations: the "mathematization of nature" (Husserl), social engineering without reference to historical considerations, instrumentalism, scientific management, and technological rationality. Temporal relations were gradually charted across a spatial field. Even what seemed to carry the force of negativity in a time dimension came to be stripped of its radical potential and artificially drawn into the arena of spatialization where it was rendered harmless.

To the same extent that capitalism as social domination tried to obliterate time, it also tried to destroy the *Lebenswelt*, which saw it as the last significant repository of temporality. In earlier periods, capitalism tapped the *Lebenswelt* for reasons of profit, but in this century it has attempted to abolish it altogether and replace it with spatialized relations administered from without — as an extension of economic interests or state power. The same is now true of "currently existing" socialism. The goal of both systems is to empty the the way for the spatialization (and easier management) of experience.

36. See Jerome Hamilton Buckley, *The Victorian Temper* (New York, 1951), p. 140.

37. Ernst Bloch, "Nonsynchronism and the Obligation to its Dialectic," *New German Critique*, 11 (Spring 1977), p. 37.

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The *Lebenswelt* contains not just elements of history, process, and continuity with the past but also active forms of subjectivity, intersubjectivity and community; an abundance of qualitative values so far not reduced to statistics by economy or state; deposits of remembrance as well as "recollective anticipations"; and everything that can be summarized under the term *residual*, which might be defined as that which was "effectively formed in the past" but which is "still active in the cultural process...as an effective element in the present."[38] All of these qualities, when put together, represent an alternative way of thinking, being, and experiencing to that offered by spatialization. This alone causes them to be defined by spatializing interests as fundamentally antagonistic and oppositional, and hence to be dealt with as threats that need to be administered, dis-empowered, or completely eradicated.

The crux of what appears to be happening at present is that the vital, durational components of the *Lebenswelt* are being discredited. Those aspects that are extractable are being torn from their context, abstracted, spatialized, and then "managed" either by commercial capitalism or by a state apparatus that concocts a spurious *Lebenswelt* that is in turn repackaged and passed off as authentic. But the problem is not just that a ruling elite is imposing a counterfeit spatialized experience on the population. Thanks to the culture industry, the population is coming to do this to itself. More and more, it is cheerfully annihilating the time dimension and liquidating along with it memory, process, and community, all in the name of progress. (This, in a word, is what Benjamin meant by the "atrophy of experience," and what the Frankfurt School lamented as the loss of genuine *Erfahrung* and its replacement by a fradulent *Erlebnis*.)

Yet despite all this, duration goes on. No matter what the interests behind economic or political domination do, they cannot kill time. It continues of its own accord. As Husserl put it, there is still a "historical *a priori*" that contains a permanent structure of becoming whether we like it or not, or take not of it or not. Furthermore, the present really does contain the past which preceded it, though this may be unperceived. There is such a thing as sedimentation. When the drive toward spatialization becomes as powerful as it is now, the time dimension does not disappear in fact, only in perception. But even though it remains, it will not be present for us — will not inform our interpretations or actions — unless it is drawn out, brought to life, made palpable in the here and now.

## V

This means that we exist at a time when something needs to be done to recapture duration. Solutions may be easy to suggest but hard to implement. Simply restoring temporalization (even if this were possible in a single stroke) is not the answer, since an excess of temporalization could lead to an assortment of reactionary ideologies which err in the opposite direction.[39] It does matter *what* in time is thematized and *how*; re-establishing continuity as

38. Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford, 1977), p. 122.
39. See Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, trans. Louis Wirth and Edward Shils (New

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such may have the merit of being backward-looking but in so indiscriminate a way as to be suspect itself. The best place to start is with the spatialized world we now inhabit. We must acknowledge its hegemony, but then look for inconsistencies within: empty spaces, negativities, distances that can be enlarged, places of vacancy that lend themselves to memory and reification (both of which transport one beyond the confines of a merely horizontal dimension).

It needs to be seen, too, that spatialization homogenizes experience. Appearances notwithstanding, spatialization creates illusory unities out of incomparabilities. It stretches what should have time-bound depth and richness along a spatial plane that invariably flattens life. This is why all reification, to the extent that it is a hypostazation of process, has a spatializing component. Bergson summarized this point by saying that spatialization turns "qualitative heterogeneity" into "extensive homogeneity."[40] This being the case, there is certainly the need, in the face of a universal commensurability of elements, to stress the value of the heterogeneous once again. This was one of the projects that Bataille set for himself as long ago as the 1930s.[41] It was also what Ernst Bloch had in mind when he called for the radical insertion into the present of non-synchronous residues and remainders from the past, which may still have enough subversive power to disrupt our overly synchronized age.[42] More recently, Michel de Certeau has argued a similar point. Within the interstices of modern society there is still room for play which might yet draw out a latent heterogeneity to challenge spatialized experience. This is to be done on the basis of what he calls "tactics," which, as modern guerrilla movements have demonstrated, are premised on lack of place, on invisibility, on not belonging anywhere, and hence on total mobility: the mobility of the unseen and unlocatable. Tactics are an inherently temporalizing medium because they imply waiting for the proper occasion to strike — an occasion that occurs not in space but *at the right time.*[43]

A procedure needs to be developed that can locate and then widen what fissures there are within spatial homogeneity so that images from the past can enter the present as disruptive elements. This has nothing to do with nostalgia. At this point, it seems that little can be gained by simply cherishing *les temps perdu* for their own sake, even if this appears to be a step away from spatialization. Much more valuable would be the practice of dislodging fragments of the past — fragments that have appeared in time, but whose traces are now being erased — and setting them in a negative relation to the

York, 1936), pp. 235-236; and "Conservative Thought," *From Karl Mannheim,* ed. Kurt H. Wolff (New York, 1971), pp. 132-222.

40. Bergson, *Time and Free Will, op.cit.,* p. 95.

41. Georges Bataille, *La Part maudite, essai d'economie generale, I. La Consumation* (Paris, 1949); see also his "The Psychological Structure of Fascism," *New German Critique,* 16 (Winter 1979), pp. 64-87.

42. Ernst Bloch, *op.cit.,* pp. 22-38. Bloch realized, however, that the non-synchronous was not by definition radical. It could also be used to tie people to an existing state, as was successfully done by National Socialism. For a more complete discussion of non-synchronism, see Bloch's *Erbschaft dieser Zeit* (Zurich, 1935).

43. Michel de Certeau, "On Oppositional Practices of Everyday Life," *Social Text,* 3 (Fall 1980), pp. 3-43.

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present so as to undermine its certainties. A time dimension would then penetrate a spatial one, but with a new kind of disturbing presence, one that does not ask to be assimilated but which destabilizes the given by introducing awarenesses that only the framework of time can provide.[44]

In this respect, historians could play an important role in combating spatialization. Should they begin stressing the radical disjunctures rather than the similarities between past and present, they might succeed in stimulating an awareness of difference and diversity once again. And this in turn could propel the imagination beyond what now only happens spatially to what has happened in time: a shift in perceptions, in other words, from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous. The production of powerful counter-images to the present is starting to emerge to some extent — for instance, in recent scholarship on ancient Greece where not the domesticated Greece of Pericles is being portrayed, but an alternate Greek culture that is "something savage or barbaric, tribal or African, or Mediterranean-sexist — a culture of masks and death, ritual ecstasies, slavery, scapegoating, phallocratic homosexuality, an utterly non- or anti-classical culture to which something of the *electrifying otherness* and fascination, say of the Aztec world has been restored."[45] This is not to say that historians need approve of these values, but there is an urgency that they be presented as *differences* from what exists today so that the present age can be seen in light of historically contrasting or diremptive ways of being. The importance of Foucault for modern historiography is that he, too, wants to rid modern thought of the antiseptic, "clean" space in which it operates, since this necessarily makes impossible any tragic confrontation with otherness. The past for him is not an "Egyptian rigidity" but an "active play of forces" that can still be used to disturb the present; it can show how "one could escape" the constraints of spatialized experience by shaking up or demolishing "the system that quietly orders us about."[46]

In all of this, the point that needs to be made most strongly is that space is not the realm of "pure possibility"; time is.[47] Space beckons us to be *everything*, but since it is an empty concept we most often end up with nothing; with absences, or the mere occupation of place. Time, on the other hand, allows us to be *something*, to develop and gain substance through process, to arrive at a qualitative rather than merely quantitative content, and perhaps ultimately to achieve what Habermas called *Mündigkeit* (maturity, autonomy). It is one of our most important tasks today to try to rescue, in ways no matter how seemingly insignificant, traces of duration from the universal embrace of spatialization.

44. Walter Benjamin has come closest to working out such a method. On this see Susan Buck-Morss, *The Origin of Negative Dialectics* (London, 1977), and her "Walter Benjamin — Revolutionary Writer (I)," *New Left Review,* 128 (July-August, 1981), pp. 55-61.

45. Jameson, *op.cit.*, p. 44, my italics.

46. See Allan Megill, "Foucault, Structuralism and the Ends of History," *Journal of Modern History,* LI (1979), No. 3, pp. 492-493.

47. I say this in opposition to Bernd Jager's otherwise thoughtful essay, "Horizontality and Verticality: A Phenomenological Exploration of Lived Space," *Duquesne Studies in Phenomenological Psychology,* I, ed. Amedeo Giorgi, William F. Fischer, and Rolf von Eckartsberg (Pittsburgh, 1971), p. 222.

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# SAVING THE SUBJECT: MODERNITY AND THE PROBLEM OF THE AUTONOMOUS INDIVIDUAL

by Joel Whitebook

## I

While the announcement that Minerva's owl is about to depart may be premature, one is increasingly struck by the feeling of living in the closing of an epoch. The project of modernity, as Habermas has called it;[1] has played itself out to the point where its essential logic is coming into relief. This accounts for the recent spate of publications on modernity in general, and cultural modernism in particular.[2] Cultural modernism is stimulated further by the lack of a meaningful "adversary culture." Indeed, today it is difficult to envision just what such a culture would look like. Nothing has emerged to fill the vacuum created by the decline of the New Left and the counter-culture — whatever their shortcomings. In retrospect, the cultural experiments of the 1960s appear entirely continuous with avant-garde practices originating in the last century.[3] The major difference consists in the fact that, whereas in the past these practices were restricted to a small elite, in the 1960s they were generalized to a remarkably large portion of the population. Be that as it may, the exhaustion of the 1960s seems to have marked the exhaustion of a tradition that has nourished cultural radicalism for over a century.

Three different responses to the crisis of modernity can be distinguished. The first two, anti-humanism and the counter-enlightenment, are alike in so far as both maintain that modernity is irredeemably *aporetic*; the crisis of modernity cannot be resolved from within, but requires a holistic transformation of the modern project. The positions differ with respect to the alternative directions they advocate. The third position, of which Habermas is the primary exponent, maintains that the crisis can only be resolved by completing, rather than abandoning, the modern project. As he asks, "should we try to hold on to the *intentions* of the Enlightenment, feeble as they may be, or should we declare the entire project of modernity a lost cause?"[4] The modern project is not *aporetic*, but only at odds with itself. The crisis of modernity, as he sees it, results from the absolutization of instrumental reason and the concomitant suppression of practical reason. He therefore seeks to rehabilitate the Enlightenment's tradition of practical reason and assert it against its tradition of instrumental reason in order to correct that

1. Jürgen Habermas, "Modernity versus Postmodernity," *New German Critique*, 22 (Winter 1981).
2. See especially Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air* (New York, 1982).
3. See for example César Grana, *Bohemian Versus Bourgeois: French Society and the French Man of Letters in the 19th Century* (New York, 1964).
4. "Modernity Versus Postmodernity," *op.cit.*, p. 9.

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imbalance.[5] It is thus with respect to practical reason that he wants to "hold on to the *intentions* of the Enlightenment."

Anti-humanism, which is becoming increasingly chic as the world grows progressively more inhuman, maintains that the crisis of modernity cannot be resolved through the fulfillment of the modern project because that project itself is the root of the crisis. The anti-humanists argue that the central categories of European humanist thought, i.e., the subject, historical progress, meaning, etc., are myths that must be abandoned if the contemporary crisis is to be resolved.[6] In his excellent account of this movement, Dallmayr summarizes the anti-humanist position: "Seen from this vantage point, the malaise of modern, contemporary life can be traced, either directly or indirectly, to its anthropocentric and subjectivist thrust, or its focus on the thinking subject; according to some, the malaise has already reached a crisis stage with the result that the 'end' or 'death of man' is imminent (if not an accomplished fact). Spokesmen differ as to the nature of proposed antidotes or substitutes for modern subjectivity and individuality; but a preferred (though not uniformly endorsed) remedy consists in a radical shift of attention, aimed at dislocating or 'decentering' man in favor of overarching structures of systematic relations."[7] Granted the dilemmas of subjectivistic epistemology or morality can only be resolved by unraveling the dialectics of subjectivity and intersubjectivity. But this is not what anti-humanists have in mind. What they advocate, instead, is a one-sided emphasis on the "overarching structures of systematic relations" that tends to exclude the subject. What the anti-humanists offer as an alternative is simply a celebration of one of the central tendencies of modernity, i.e., the absolutization of instrumental reasons. They reflect in theory what the capitalist rationalization is accomplishing in practice: the eclipse of the subject by the "overarching structures" of a reified world.

This is not to say that the concept of the subject is without difficulties. Let us consider, for example, the following observation by Hans Loewald concerning the relation of psychoanalysis to the individual: "With reference to the problem of individuation and the status of the individual, psychoanalysis appears to be in an awkward position. On the one hand, it seems to stand and fall with the proposition that the emergence of a relatively autonomous individual is the culmination of human development. How this may come about and what interferes with such an outcome, resulting in psychopathology, is a most important aspect of psychoanalytic research, reconstruction and treatment.... On the other hand, in part owing to

5. Joel Whitebook, "The Problem of Nature in Habermas," *Telos*, 40 (Summer 1979), pp. 63ff.

6. The charge that these categories are nothing but the unreflected prejudices of 19th-century Europe is a bit peculiar. They are no more the prejudices of 19th-century Europe than the ideas that truth must be supra-individual and atemporal, which the anti-humanists dogmatically presuppose, are the prejudices of 6th-century B.C. Greece.

7. Fred Dallmayr, *Twilight of Subjectivity: Contributions to a Post-Individualist Theory of Politics* (Amherst, 1981), p. 11. See also Reiner Schürmann, "Anti-Humanism, Reflections of the Turn Toward the Post-Modern Epoch," *Man and World*, XII:2 (1979).

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analytic research, there is a growing awareness of the force and validity of another striving, that for unity, symbiosis, fusion, merging, identification — whatever name we wish to give this sense of longing for non-separateness and undifferentiation.... The more we understand about primitive mentality, which constitutes a deeper layer of advanced mentality, the harder it becomes to escape the idea that this implicit sense of and quest for irrational non-differentiation of subject and object contains a truth of its own, granted that this other truth fits badly with our rational world view and quest for objectivity."[8] What Loewald says of psychoanalysis also applies to Marxism, for it too suffers from a certain awkwardness with respect to the autonomous individual. For reasons Loewald alluded to, the notion is itself fraught with complications.

With the advent of modernity the relation between the individual and the supra-individual collectivity, the "social substance," underwent a fundamental transformation. As Aristotle — who expressed the premodern outlook in this as in so many other matters — put it: "the *polis* is prior to the individual." This priority is both temporal and logical. The social substance exists prior to the birth of any of its individual members, transforms the neonate into a social, i.e., human being through its socialization process, and continues to exist after their death. Moreover, the status position occupied by an individual during his lifetime is prescribed by the unchanging articulation of the social substance and ultimately of the intelligible cosmos. The positions remain while the occupants are transitory. What the individual gains from the existence of a meaningful, well-articulated cosmic and social order, he loses in the restrictions that order places on the possibilities for his personal development. The order may be secure and intelligible, but it is also constricting. The premodern world provides "satisfaction from a limited standpoint."[9] The modern idea that the collectivity is somehow grounded in the will of the individual would have been inconceivable to most premodern peoples. As Hegel never tired of pointing out, Socrates' presumption to have judged the traditions of the *polis* in the subjectivity of his proto-conscience spells the end of the cohesiveness of Athenian *Sittlichkeit*. Indeed, Socrates raises the argument against himself that as he is its product, he is not free to leave Athens — the *polis* educated him. For the most part, the legitimacy of premodern societies is traced to a mythical or religious foundation that exists within the givenness of a fact of nature.

Prior to modernity, an "independent" individual, who did not occupy a specific position in a given social order, was a marginal phenomenon, existing only in the "pores" of society. The renewal of trade in the late Middle Ages, however, had the effect of disembedding increasing numbers of individuals from the social substance of the feudal world. These "new men" congregated in towns where a new way of life, based on commerce and distinct from the traditional life of the countryside, began to emerge. One's life possibilities

8. "The Waning of the Oedipus Complex," *Papers on Psychoanalysis* (New Haven, 1980), pp. 101-102.

9. Karl Marx, *Grundrisse,* trans. Martin Nicolaus (New York, 1973), p. 488.

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were no longer limited by the status position into which one was born and the traditional constraints attached thereto, but could be expanded by personal initiative and industry. Social mobility became a possibility. This imparted a new, dynamic quality to life as a whole. As material gain — as opposed to salvation, for example — became the primary end of human association, the contractual relation governing commerce was often hypostatized into the basic structure of human association by modern political theorists. But there is more to the social contract tradition than the unwarranted universalization of the modes of relation obtaining in a commercial civilization. Mythical as the idea of a social contract may be, the contractarian tradition nevertheless represents a demythologizing attempt to provide a scientific, i.e., non-traditional, account of the foundations of society. The contractarian attempt to rationally construct the collectivity out of a multiplicity of atomic individuals was unprecedented. For them, the individual had become prior to the polity. Whatever the shortcomings of the contractarians, they established the requirement that the grounding and legitimation of the social order had to be established rationally.

The "break with tradition" that marks the emergence of modern society constitutes the hermeneutic horizon without which the theories of Marx and Freud would be unintelligible. Both thinkers axiomatically assume that human activity ought no longer be determined by the quasi-natural givenness of traditional authority, but ought to derive from the autonomous deliberations of men themselves.[10] There is thus more to Marx and Freud's dedication to science than their sometimes uncritical acceptance of the tenets of 19th-century positivism, for which they have been justly criticized. They were both scientists in the profounder sense of demythologizers:[11] each insisted that the beliefs which not only rationalize individual and social unfreedom, but often make the burden of existence more bearable, be scrutinized before the tribunal of autonomous reason. "The critique of religion is the premise of all critique" for both, and each wrote a work on religion that exemplifies their critical method. Despite its origins in a 19th-century sensibility, Marx and Freud's disdain for parochial prejudice, sentimentality, mystification and cant are still to be admired.[12]

10. Cf. "Enlightenment is man's leaving his self-caused immaturity. Immaturity is the incapacity to use one's intelligence without the guidance of another. Such immaturity is self-caused if it is not caused by lack of intelligence, but by lack of determination and courage to use one's intelligence without being guided by another. *Sapere Aude!* Have the courage to use your intelligence! is therefore the motto of the enlightenment." Immanuel Kant, "What Is Enlightenment?" *Immanuel Kant's Moral and Political Writings,* ed. Carl J. Friedrich (New York, 1949), p. 132.

11. See Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*, trans. Denis Savage (New Haven, 1970), pp. 32ff.

12. After all, Marx praised capitalism for its *demythologizing* function: "Constantly revolutionizing production, uninterrupted disturbance of social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and vulnerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind." "Manifesto of the Communist Party," *Karl*

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Freud's awkwardness toward the autonomous individual is somewhat different from Marx's. Freud was thoroughly unambivalent about autonomy *as a normative goal.* Indeed, his dictum "where id was, ego shall be" represents a programmatic call for the attainment of that goal. As a cosmopolitan Viennese from a recently secularized Jewish family, raised in the *Aufklärung* atmosphere of the 19th-century German cultural orbit, the validity of the modern European bourgeois code of ethics — a central component of which is the autonomy of the individual — appeared self-evident to Freud.[13] These values were so deeply entrenched in Freud's thinking that, even when his own scientific investigations produced results that challenged the rationalistic anthropology on which that moral code was based, and revealed the instinctual price paid for their achievement, he hardly wavered in his commitment to them. The re-evaluation of that commitment has, of course, been a path followed by some of our better known, psychoanalytically oriented culture critics. Indeed, much of the pathos of Freud's position results from his refusal to forsake his ethico-cultural stance, on the one hand, or to soften his unsettling scientific findings on the other. As Adorno observed, Freud, "like all great bourgeois thinkers, . . . left standing undissolved such contradictions and disdained the assertion of pretended harmony where the thing itself is contradictory."[14]

Owing to his greater attention to the historical dimension, Marx's treatment of the autonomous individual is more differentiated than Freud's. It must be recognized that, despite certain undeniable romantic elements that persisted throughout his career,[15] Marx was an enthusiastic advocate of modern civilization. He made a distinction, which is not always adequately appreciated, between "the modern epoch" or "the modern world" on the one hand, and its "limited bourgeois form" on the other.[16] He envisioned a socialist revolution stripping away that "limited bourgeois form" so that a communist society would constitute a fully actualized modernity.[17]

*Marx and Fredrick Engels: Selected Works*, Vol. I (Moscow, 1969), p. 131. See also Freud, "The Future of an Illusion," *The Standard Edition of the Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud,* Vol. XXI, trans. and edited by James Strachey (London, 1961).

13. As Hartmann points out, Freud never attempted systematically to validate the normative presuppositions of psychoanalysis because he considered moral issues unproblematic. Freud was reportedly fond of quoting that "What is moral is self-evident." Cf. Heinz Hartmann, *Psychoanalysis and Moral Values* (New York, 1960).

14. Theodor W. Adorno, "Die revidierte Psychoanalyse," in Adorno, Horkheimer and Marcuse, *Kritische Theorie der Gesellschaft* (n.p., n.d.), p. 41. Quoted in Russell Jacoby, *Social Amnesia: A Critique of Conformist Psychology from Adler to Laing* (Boston, 1975), p. 28.

15. See Michael Löwy, "Marxism and Revolutionary Romanticism," *Telos*, 49 (Fall 1981), pp. 83ff.

16. See Berman, *All That Is Solid..., op.cit.*, pp. 355-356, note 9.

17. This distinction helps clarify passages where Marx sounds nostalgic for premodern society: Premodern society may appear morally and culturally superior to modern society in its "limited bourgeois form," but, in the long run, Marx never doubted that a mature modernity would be superior to the integrated but constricted world of premodern society: "In bourgeois economics — and in the epoch of production to which it corresponds — this complete working-out of the human content appears as a complete emptying-out, this universal objectification as total alienation, and the tearing-down of all limited, one-sided aims as sacrifice of the human end-in-itself to an entirely external end. This is why the childish world of antiquity

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Corresponding to this distinction, Marx makes another one between abstract and concrete individuality; abstract individuality is the alienated form of individuality that exists in capitalist society, and concrete individuality is the form of individuality that would be achieved under communism. For Marx, then, the bourgeois individual, while constituting a clear advance over the unindividuated conditions of *Gemeinschaft*, represents an abstract form of individuality, which prepares the ground for and would be *aufgehoben* into a concrete form of individuality under socialism.[18]

For a variety of historical reasons, the Western left has often failed to grasp properly Marx's distinction between abstract and concrete individuality, and has taken his critique of bourgeois individuality as a critique of individuality *as such*. This confusion has resulted in disastrous political consequences. The major contributor to this confusion may have been the fact that major "socialist" revolutions have not occurred in Europe but in backward, non-Western countries. This development contradicts not only Marx's predictions, but, more importantly, the logic of his entire position. It was thanks primarily to the ideological contortions of Trotsky that these revolutions received a thin veneer of theoretical justification. The underdevelopment of traditions of individual freedom in these countries is as important as the more often cited underdevelopment of the forces of production in accounting for the so-called distortions of socialism. The seizure of power in Russia and China and the successful anti-colonial struggles in other underdeveloped countries have lent enormous prestige to the ideas attached to these revolutions. And these ideas, which constitute a fundamental alteration of Marx for non-Western conditions of underdevelopment, have often, in turn, been reimported to the West, where they are no longer appropriate. There they combine with a native contempt for bourgeois philistinism, traceable in part to 19th-century Bohemianism, to produce the utter idiocy of educated Western radicals trying to mimic Third World peasants. This situation has not been very helpful in the effort of Western radicals to understand their own situation.

It is absolutely essential that Western leftists clarify their position concerning the individual if they are ever to recover from the current level of political oblivion. It is peculiar that, at times, one hears radicals speaking as if the Left, and not the system, were the true defender of the individual. At other times, however, it sounds as if the individual were nothing but a

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appears on one side as loftier. On the other side, it really is loftier in all matters where closed shapes, forms and given limits are sought for. It is satisfaction from a limited standpoint; while the modern gives no satisfaction; or, where it appears satisfied with itself, it is *vulgar*." See *Grundrisse, op.cit.*, p. 488.

18. While Marx tells us little about the content of concrete individuality, it apparently must reconcile the individuation achieved under capitalism, which is always in danger of degenerating into atomization, with the integration of precapitalist society, which in turn is always in danger of submerging the individual — a neat trick indeed! See Carol Gould, *Marx's Social Ontology* (Cambridge, Mass., 1978). Peter Berger has argued that the particular appeal of socialism results from its illusory promise to reconcile the communal solidarity of precapitalist society with the personal freedom and technical advances of capitalism, thus speaking to the deepest and most contradictory aspirations of modern Western man. Cf. Peter Berger, *Facing up to Modernity: Excursions in Society, Politics and Religion* (New York, 1977).

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decadent epiphenomenon of the capitalist economy which ought to be abolished rather than emancipated in a socialist society. In order to sort out this confusion, it is necessary to distinguish between atomization and individuation, where atomization would be a term of condemnation and individuation one of approbation. Lukes has shown that various attempts have been made to defend such a distinction throughout the history of modern radical movements.[19] For example, in 19th-century French thought one can find a contrast between *individualism* and *individualité*, which seeks to make this very distinction. If such a distinction is not made, one is left with the unacceptable alternative of choosing between capitalist atomization or a collectivism that suppresses individuation.

## II

Whereas in premodern ethical systems, e.g., Aristotle's, the individual typically had only to conform to the publicly articulated code of conduct, in the modern conception, which received its classical formulation in Kant, the individual must determine what is good within the tribunal of his own subjective conscience. Autonomy replaces virtue as a central ethical value. For Kant, to be autonomous is to be self-determining or, put more technically, self-legislating: one is autonomous when following laws of one's own making rather than being subject to the heteronomous laws of inner or outer nature. Self-determination, however, does not mean arbitrariness. It is not liberty as classical liberalism conceived it. On the contrary, Kant maintained that one is truly self-legislating only when the maxims of action one gives oneself are in accordance with reason, which means in accordance with the laws peculiar to a community of rational beings. Kant introduced the distinction, which reappears in Hegel, between objective *Wille* and subjective *Wilkür*, often translated as caprice, to make this point. We are autonomous when the maxims of our will are brought into accordance with the demands of reason and are therefore objective (*Wille*) and not, as one might think, when they are determined arbitrarily (*Wilkür*).

The categorical imperative is Kant's attempt to formulate a decision procedure for determining when maxims of action are in fact of one's own making, i.e., in accord with the demands of reason, and when they derive from heteronomous nature.[20] Hegel agrees with Kant that autonomy constitutes the proper normative concept for modern practical philosophy. Yet, he insists that its realization cannot be displaced onto an extra-empirical "kingdom of ends." Rather, he holds that it must be realized in a community

19. Steven Lukes, *Individualism* (Oxford, 1973), p. 8.

20. As the Frankfurt School emphasized, however, while inner nature refers to biological drives, outer nature can be subdivided into the natural and the social environment to the extent that it is objectified and acts on the individual in a quasi-natural (*natürwuchsig*) fashion. Examples of the latter would be the seeming naturalness with which traditional authority presents itself as well as the quasi-natural functioning of the "self-regulating market." Autonomy, in that it consists in an independence from the compulsions of inner and outer nature, thus presupposes the attainment of relative mastery over the drives, the natural environment, and the objectified social environment. See Jeremy J. Shapiro, "The Slime of History: Embeddedness in Nature and Critical Theory," *On Critical Theory*, ed. John O'Neill (New York, 1976).

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of autonomous individuals. This marks the transition from a subjectivistically conceived Kantian morality (*Moralität*) to a pluralistically conceived Hegelian theory of ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*). Yet there is something lost in the rapidity of Hegel's move from the transcendental to the empirical. For Kant, everywhere man is transcendentally free but empirically in chains. Thus, he cannot explain how that transcendental freedom can become empirically effective. With Hegel, man is free in the modern world but, as he tends to suppress the transcendental moment, he cannot spell out the criteria for making that claim. This suppression of the transcendental-critical moment, inherited by Marx, played itself out with such lethal consequences in the Marxist movement. This is not to imply, however, that a pluralistically conceived theory necessarily suppresses the critical moment and that morality has to be grounded in an egological conception. Hegel was correct in moving from the standpoint of consciousness to the standpoint of Spirit. Apel and Habermas' communicative ethics represents an attempt to formulate a pluralistic theory with an elaborated transcendental moment.

Hegel's treatment of the relation between the individual and collective is unique among modern philosophers. On the one hand, he recognized that a new predominance of the subject, a "subjective turn," had occurred in the various spheres of life, e.g., economics, morality, philosophy, romantic and sexual relations, and art. He subsumed all these developments under the terms subjective freedom and considered its institutionalization the most novel feature of the modern world. On the other hand, he also criticized modern political philosophers for *assigning undue priority* to the atomic individual. How can this be? Hegel's point is that the supra-individual collectivity cannot be "constructed," either logically or historically, out of the atomic individual as an ultimate *factum*. He recognized that the individual was a product of history, which presupposed the accomplishments of the Christian era and the bourgeois-democratic revolutions. And he maintained, logically, a collection of atomic individuals, "a mere heap," could never exist on its own without a supra-individual institutional framework that constituted and maintained their atomicity: civil society.

The concept of civil society has not always been adequately appreciated within the Marxist tradition, where there has been a tendency to simply collapse it into the capitalist market and dismiss it. Of course, the market has been an essential feature of civil society and possessive individualism a central form of modern individuality. But the concept is much wider than its economic dimension. As Riedel has shown,[21] Hegel was the first to recognize that a novel domain of human interaction had been institutionalized in the modern world — a domain in which the "right to subjective freedom" received institutional and juridical legitimation. The epochal innovation of modernity consisted in the institutionalization of a realm in which, at least in principle, individuals for the first time had the right to pursue their self-

21. Manfred Reidel, "Hegels Begriff der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft und das Problem seines geschichtlichen Ursprungs," *Materialien zu Hegels Rechtsphilosophie,* Band 2, ed. Manfred Reidel (Frankfurt, 1975), pp. 247-248.

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development unencumbered by the restrictions of tradition or status. This, as Hegel recognized, is the unsurpassable achievement of the modern world. But the subject's freedom is grounded in the supra-individual collectivity that institutionalizes the right to subjective freedom as a moment in modern society (and not as its ground, as the contractarians had claimed).[22]

Hegel is thus confronted with this dilemma: With modern liberalism, he wants to assert the right to subjective freedom — "liberty" — as an authentic accomplishment of the modern world, and to maintain that, despite its admitted allure, there is something fundamentally lacking in the classical world. Unlike the liberals, however, Hegel is willing to confront the destructive consequences of the institutionalization of subjective freedom. He recognizes that, as Plato and Aristotle had forseen, the institutionalization of subjective freedom unleashes a dynamic — driven primarily by the market — which dissolves all forms of traditional authority and collective solidarity. Thus, it is necessary to show how the centrifugal forces of civil society can be contained and prevented from destroying the integrity of social life. The problem is complicated by the fact that, as the right to subjective freedom has been legitimized as such, and as the subjective will "has no measuring rod within itself,"[23] Hegel has no criteria to criticize the excesses of capricious individuality (*Wilkür*) as long as legality is not violated. Worse yet, with the continued development of civil society, residual forms of traditional authority tend to be undermined, so that they cease to act as restraints on particularity. As Hegel's proposed solutions have often been criticized — most notably by Marx — we need not consider them in detail here. What is often overlooked, however, is *how close the logic of Marx's own solution is to Hegel's.*

In general, Marx agrees with Hegel's elaboration of Kant, but thinks that Hegel did not go far enough. Hegel was correct in recognizing that "the atomizing forces" of civil society were essential for the emancipation of the individual from the constraints of traditional society and the articulation of the modern, liberal *ethos*. Historically, economic individualism has been connected with the flowering of the other forms of individuality, e.g., Classical Athens and the Renaissance. This point has always been the element of good faith in the classical liberal (now conservative) argument

22. This is not without problems. Premodern people tended to be suspicious of subjective freedom because of the corrosive threat it posed to social integration. They therefore generally sought to suppress it. Hegel criticizes Plato and Aristotle, who can be taken as premodern traditionalists in this respect, for attempting to purchase collective cohesion and solidarity at the price of suppressing subjective freedom in their political schemes. This has always been the collectivist solution to the problem of subjective freedom. Cf. G.W.F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right,* trans. T.M. Knox (Oxford, 1935), and Joel Whitebook, "Pre-Market Economics: The Aristotelian Perspective," *Dialectical Anthropology,* 3 (1978), pp. 197-220, and M.B. Foster, *The Political Philosophies of Plato and Hegel* (Oxford, 1935).

23. *Philosophy of Right,* Paragraph 17. It should be pointed out in this context how modern Habermas' approach is compared to that of the old Frankfurt School. Whereas Marcuse, for example, employs a *substantive* doctrine of true and false needs, Habermas appreciates that, once the right to subjective freedom has been recognized, an appeal to a substantive doctrine of needs is illicit. His approach is therefore *procedural,* that is, it has to do with the formal procedures for adjudicating needs and abstains from discussing the substantive content of needs. See Seyla Benhabib's review of McCarthy, *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas,* in *Telos,* 40 (Summer 1979), pp. 177-187.

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against the restriction of the market. Hegel, however, fails to realize that the problems of civil society are not incidental and susceptible to *ad hoc* amelioration, but are systemic and, in the long run, fatal to the structure of civil society itself. As Horkheimer observed: "Liberalism may be said to have considered itself the sponsor of a utopia that had come true, needing little more than the smoothing out of a few troublesome wrinkles. These wrinkles were not to be blamed on liberalistic principle, but on the regrettable non-liberalistic obstacles that impeded its complete fruition."[24] Marx shows that the obstacles to this complete fruition of the liberal utopia are intrinsic to liberalism and that, furthermore, if left to their own, the forces of civil society would unfold into barbarism. The *aporia* of liberalism, both with respect to the realization of its own project and the avoidance of barbarism, can only be overcome by moving to the "standpoint of socialism." Marx's own program, then, can be construed as calling for the removal of the economic obstacles, i.e., the capitalist economy, to the complete fruition of the modern project. Socialism would be a fully realized modernity. This entire conception, however, rests on the assumption that other forms of individualism can be disengaged from possessive individualism.

The claim that Marx is an enthusiastic champion of modern society raises a perplexing question about his unthematized background assumptions. Namely, what values allow him to judge modern society so affirmatively? The problem is complicated by the fact that Marx changed his concept of ideology midway through his career.[25] When Marx moves to a "scientific" mode of theorizing, ideology ceases to be "the true in an untrue form," and becomes false consciousness pure and simple, the superstructural reflection of the economic base. As the professed norms of bourgeois society are no longer held to possess intrinsic worth, no internal standard is available for critique. The situation in theory mirrors the situation in reality, for capitalist society tends toward a self-sufficient rationalized totality — a "social ontology" — that systematically destroys all pre-determined yardsticks, i.e., all residually existing forms of precapitalist social value.

The mature scientific Marx can only "describe" but not evaluate capitalism or any other social formation. Marx's active advocacy of modern society in the *Grundrisse*, however, is beyond dispute. Which norms, then, is he tacitly employing? Heller convincingly argues that, for Marx, abundance is an "ontologically primarily and empirically underivable category."[26] If so,

24. Max Horkheimer, *Eclipse of Reason* (New York, 1974), p. 139.

25. Albrecht Wellmer, *Critical Theory of Society*, trans. John Cumming (New York, 1974), p. 90. For the younger Marx, all ideological expressions, while they serve to rationalize and obfuscate reality, also contain a utopian rational kernel that points beyond the given state of affairs. And this utopian kernel can be employed as the basis for an immanent critique of the established order that the ideology is meant to legitimize. Thus, the strategy of the young Marx, as a radical liberal, was to criticize civil society in the name of its own professed norms.

26. Agnes Heller, "Towards a Marxist Theory of Value," trans. Andrew Arato, special issue of *Kinesis*, V:1 (Fall 1972), p. 19. She writes: "From the viewpoint of Marxian social ontology, it is impossible to empirically derive values. Marx, in fact, did have a fundamental universal value axiom from which all his values and value judgments can be axiologically derived. This ontologically primary and empirically underivable category is *abundance* (*Reichtum*). What is 'abundance'? *It is the many-sided unfolding of the essential power of the species.* Thus, we obtain

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however, it is a dogmatically held belief. If Marx gave up the self-proclaimed values of the bourgeoisie, he held onto their most deeply rooted one: growth above all else. The concept of abundance also allows him to bridge a conceptual gap in his thinking. By blurring the distinction between the qualitative and the quantitative, the term allows him to stretch the limits of his scientistically conceived theorizing without violating them altogether. Marx wants to praise capitalism and modernity, but his own scientistic self-understanding does not permit it. However, if sheer quantitative abundance — which is not a strictly normative concept — is taken as the measure, then there is no question that capitalism should be praised. At the same time, the term allows Marx to suggest he is referring to a qualitative and more properly normative concept such as "well-roundedness." This is what allows commentators to see the many-sided "social individual" of the *Grundrisse* as the well-rounded man of the manuscripts and not as the world-historical consumer.[27]

Marx inherited this problematic from Hegel, who argued that the development of civil society constitutes a *Bildungsprozess* by means of which particularity will be "educated up" to universality and the destructiveness of particularity thereby contained. Against this, Marx argues that the centrifugal forces of civil society cannot be contained within civil society in "its limited bourgeois form" but must burst it asunder. However, Marx adopts Hegel's argument that the unfolding of civil society, which in the short run destroys all forms of ethicality, constitutes a *Bildungsprozess* — "the civilizing function of capital" — which, in the long run, will lead to the re-establishment of ethical life on a higher order. Only, whereas Hegel holds that the restabilization can be established *within* existing modern society, Marx maintains it can only be achieved *beyond* the established order, under socialism. Is this any less an instance of wishful thinking than Hegel's belief that the dynamism of the market could be tamed within bourgeois society?

the first value axiom: value is whatever helps the enrichment of the powers of the species; and the second value axiom: the highest value is *the ability of individuals to appropriate the abundance of the species*. Marx actually derived all values from the above two value axioms. Thus, for example, the core of the critique of all 'naturally given' communities is that *abundance was not a goal*. The community followed limited goals, thus also limiting the individual. But even among these societies Marx valued greatly those types of formations where the individual could appropriate the given level of abundance. Thus, he saw the polis as mankind's normal childhood with 'normality' being obviously a value category."

27. See Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago, 1958), p. 133. A parallel difficulty occurs with Marx's use of the term cooperation, another concept he wants to employ to praise capitalism. What Marx means is that, through the action of the market, local social groups and individuals lose their relative economic self-sufficiency (*autarchy*) and are compelled to enter the system of needs to fulfill their economic needs. While it is true that quantitatively more individuals are brought together in economic interaction under capitalism, to call this 'cooperation' is misleading. And it seems especially bizarre to refer to the interaction on the factory floor — as opposed to the guild workshop, for example — as 'cooperation' simply by virtue of the fact that many individuals are brought together in a workplace governed by a sophisticated division of labor. Indeed, Marx was forced to try to show, by the logic of his position, that this sort of regimentation, i.e., the rationalization of the workplace, would produce revolutionary consciousness! See Georg Lukacs, "Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat," *History and Class Consciousness*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge, Mass., 1971).

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Try as he might throughout his career, from the "immiseration theory" to the more sophisticated arguments of the *Grundrisse*, Marx was never able to locate the "redemptive dialectic"[28] that could ground the transition to socialism in any sense worth defending in the immanent logic of capitalism. Minus a redemptive dialectic, the Marxian account of modernity, with its methodical destruction of traditional society and its reification of the lifeworld, differs little from Weber's, either with respect to its content or to its bleakness.

Without a redemptive dialectic, Marx cannot move beyond the abstract individuality of bourgeois society. The promissory note for a concept of concrete individuality remains unredeemed. However, it does not follow from the fact that the logic of bourgeois society fails to unfold into socialism that it ceases to unfold altogether. On the contrary, it has demonstrated an uncanny ability to continue developing "on its own premises." Moreover, while the atomizing forces of civil society may have been initially "progressive" in differentiating the individual from the collectivity and articulating the norm of autonomous individuality, *beyond a certain point* that logic becomes retrogressive.

## III

For the old Frankfurt School, classic bourgeois culture represents a short, self-liquidating historical moment — "the brief intermezzo of liberalism" — that assumes a quasi-normative significance in their thinking. The forces of tradition and progress were posed, for an instant, in such a way that the positive aspects of modernism could express themselves before modernity's nihilistic tendencies had unfolded in the extreme.[29] Bourgeois culture articulates laudable ideals, albeit in an ideological form, and only partly realizes them in practice. The task becomes to separate the utopian *promesse de bonheur* and to develop it into an elaborated conception of emancipation. In a sense, this is Habermas' strategy. But, whereas the old Frankfurt School emphasized the utopian content of high bourgeois culture, Habermas

28. See Murray Bookchin, "Post-Scarcity Anarchism," *Post-Scarcity Anarchism* (Berkeley, 1971), pp. 37ff.

29. The dialectic is most apparent in the case of aesthetic modernism. How is it that at the same time as the *avant garde* appears to have bankrupted itself completely, "classical" modernism retains a quasi-normative position in our imagination, much as the Greeks did for Marx? In part, the answer lies in the fact that, despite its rebelliousness, early modernism continued to live off the residue of cultural tradition. And it was this particular mix of rebellious innovation and continuity with cultural tradition that imparted this particular attractiveness to "classical" modernism. However, insofar as modernism institutionalizes the "profaning" of everything normative, a point is reached where all the residual content of tradition has been exhausted, and the *avant garde* can do nothing but repeat scandalous gestures that no longer scandalize. After all, today every high school kid is a surrealist. The *avant garde* has destroyed all given content, simply by virtue of its givenness, and cannot generate any new content of its own. However, Graff and Habermas have made the point, against the neo-conservatives, that ultimately it is not the cultural modernists who are responsible for the debasement of everything normative, but the nihilistic *telos* of the capitalist market. As Graff observes: "The 'established order' is itself embarked on the radical disruption of the sense of reality. One of my central arguments is that the real 'avant-garde' is advanced capitalism, with its built-in need to destroy all vestiges of tradition, all orthodox ideologies, all continuous and stable forms of reality in order to stimulate higher levels of consumption." *Literature Against Itself: Literary Ideas in Modern Society* (Chicago, 1979), p. 8, and Jürgen Habermas, "Modernity versus Postmodernity," *op.cit.*, pp. 4ff. For an opposing view, see John Fekete, "On Interpretation," *Telos*, 48 (Summer 1981).

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concentrates on the structural advances of bourgeois morality and legality.

This difference of emphasis has important substantial consequences.

The early Frankfurt School held that during the heydey of liberalism, the individual was so equipoised between the insufficient differentiation of precapitalist *Gemeinschaft* and the atomization of advanced capitalism as to suggest a normative concept of individuality. However, the further unfolding of the forces that had brought the individual into existence as a partial reality upset that temporary equilibrium and began to subvert it. As Horkheimer puts it, with the transition from *laissez-faire* to organized capitalism, the individual "loses its economic basis." In comparison to precapitalist society, the bourgeois individual — although admittedly subject to the "impersonal forces of the market" — had achieved sufficient autonomy with respect to morality, legality, choice of occupation, personal life, etc., to indicate the contours of an adequate theory of individuality. And *vis-à-vis* advanced capitalist society, market forces had not yet dissolved private enterprise, the extended family, the neighborhood, etc., and concentrated the economy, so that one did not witness today's strange combination of anomie and over-socialization. As Adorno put it: "The prebourgeois order does not yet know psychology, the over-socialized one knows it no longer."[30]

The older generation of critical theorists maintained that the transformation of family structures that accompanied the transition from *laissez-faire* to late capitalism rendered classical Freudian theory obsolete. The classical Oedipus complex, they argued, presupposes a family constellation in which the father's authority remains unambiguously intact. The decline of the family business and private entrepreneurship, and the father's employment in a large bureaucratized corporation, where he becomes another cog in the machinery, diminishes that authority.[31] This creates a vacuum which is filled by the outside society. Hegel and bourgeois social theory had held that the family ought to remain an institutionally distinct realm insulated from civil society — "a haven in a heartless world." This is necessary not only for the emotional rejuvenation of the father, but also for the proper socialization of the young. With the decline of parental authority and the concomitant increase in the role of mass education and the media in the socialization of the young, this insularity breaks down and civil society directly penetrates the domestic sphere. The "average expectable environment" is no longer expectable.

This development is troublesome because the "direct socialization" of the young, which bypasses the "struggle with the father," creates individuals less capable of autonomously mediating their relation to the social order, and therefore more susceptible to the manipulations of mass society.[32] While the old critical theorists were well aware of the prices exacted by the attainment

30. "Sociology and Psychology," *New Left Review*, 47 (January-February 1968), p. 95. See also Jacoby, *op.cit.*, pp. 37ff.

31. Frankfurt Institute, *Aspects of Sociology*, trans. John Viertel (Boston, 1972), pp. 141-142.

32. Herbert Marcuse, "The Obsolescence of the Freudian Concept of Man," *Five Lectures*, trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro and Shierry M. Weber (Boston, 1970), p. 47.

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of that autonomy in terms of repression, guilt, neurosis, etc., the alternative was unquestionably more objectionable.

Here we arrive at a central *aporia* of the early Frankfurt School. Its members sought an individual who could autonomously and rationally oppose the authoritarianism of the existing order, but the only way they knew to achieve that rational autonomy was through the internalization of paternal parental authority. Jessica Benjamin formulates the dilemma well: "Yet, at the center of critical theory's analysis of modern capitalism is a paradox about the nature of resistance to domination. Those aspects of consciousness where this resistance might be located — critical reason, individuation, integrity and ultimately resistance itself — are tied to the process of internalizing authority. As a result, the rejection of authority can only take place through its prior acceptance. Even though the subjective dimension of domination is found to be in the way authority is internalized, the only possible resistance to authority is located in the same process of internalization. If reason, reflection and individuation are historically tied to the process of internalizing authority, is not the result that authority is in some sense seen as necessary or even vindicated?"[33] Unfortunately, after having posed the question so well, Benjamin does not pursue the issues as fruitfully as one might have wished. To begin with, she fails to distinguish, as do many anti-authoritarian leftists, between authority and authoritarianism, leaving the impression that authority as such is to be opposed. It is difficult to imagine a social order without authority, nor does one seem particularly desirable. Indeed, one of the central problems of our day is that the capitalist market is "profaning" everything authoritative so that nothing seems "solid." The Left, if it is going to effectively counter the neo-conservative return to traditionalism, must show that authority can be established on a rational, non-authoritarian basis. This, of course, was the great hope of the Enlightenment. At any rate, given the dilemma, as she poses it, two alternatives present themselves for its dissolution. Either one can reject "reason, reflection, and individuation" as norms, as some of our more avant-garde culture critics and feminist theoreticians more or less implicitly do. Or, one can try to formulate alternative modes of socialization through which autonomy can be achieved without the internalization of paternal authority.

The old Frankfurt School's predictions about the end of the individual, first formulated in the 1940s, have proven accurate. One can see much of the current discussion of narcissism, borderline character disorders, pathologies of the self, etc., in psychoanalysis as validating those predictions. While there is no universal agreement concerning either the description or explanation of

33. "The End of Internalization," *Telos*, 32 (Summer 1977), p. 42. Piaget — and Habermas follows him here — suggests an interesting alternative. He maintains that "the struggle with the father" and the parental generation in general do not produce autonomy — "respect for the law" — but only pietistic "compliance with the law" motivated by fear. He seeks to show that true Pandora's box of irrationalist regressivism and ultimately, I suspect, of fascism. After all, Heidegger was perhaps the most effective spokesman for the right counter-Enlightenment in this century and, their opposition to him notwithstanding, the affinity between Heidegger and the left counter-Enlightenment has often been noted. Habermas' project as a whole suffers from his inability to take the counter-Enlightenment more seriously.

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these phenomena, there exists a broad consensus that a new type of patient is presenting himself for treatment with increasing regularity. The "classical neurotic," for whom "classical psychoanalysis" was designed, typically suffered from painful symptoms lodged in a self that was otherwise well-structured and basically intact. Genetically, this type of pathology can be traced to the Oedipal stage of development. The "new patient," in contrast, tends to suffer from disorders in the very sense of self. While he has developed beyond the elemental deficiencies of the psychotic, his development has not progressed to the point where a stable identity structure has been formed. The self, in short, fails to coalesce adequately and cannot be taken for granted in psychotherapeutic treatment; rather, the consolidation of the self becomes a primary goal of that treatment.

Despite the general weakness of his theoretical position and the dubiousness of many of his technical recommendations, one point of Kohut's remains valid: namely, that narcissistic pathology is to our time as hysterical pathology was to Freud's. Just as the investigation of the hysteric led Freud to a critique of the sexual repressiveness of Victorian society, so the study of narcissism leads us to the pathogenic core of ours. This is why the moralistic critique of "me-ism" — however distasteful "me-ism" admittedly is — misses the important point. The spread of narcissistic phenomena in the society at large and the increase of narcissistic psychopathology in the consulting room — no matter what the exact connection between the two ultimately is — both result from the fact that as the individuation process approaches the pole of isolation, the content of subjectivity concomitantly approaches the zero point: "The more strictly the psychological realm is conceived as an autonomous, self-enclosed play of forces, the more completely the subject is drained of subjectivity. The objectless subject that is thrown back on himself freezes into an object."[34] The paradox concerning narcissism is that the narcissistic preoccupation with the self, which ostensibly aims at its enrichment, is in fact a symptom of the poverty of the self, and results in even further impoverishment. Today the "atomizing forces of civil society," which were so crucial in the creation of the individual, have done their work in destroying the forms of association that previously nurtured individuality. Narcissism is the desperate attempt to cope with that atomization.

## IV

The question of autonomy is only half of the story, for critical theory has also always concerned itself with the question of happiness as well. Already in Kant the question of morality and the question of happiness are separated so that morality only bestows the worthiness to be happy, not happiness itself. Rational autonomy may not be enough. Though it is surely a necessary condition of an emancipated life, its achievement might leave the deeper yearnings of the age untouched. What Loewald said of the individual is also true for society: regardless of how strongly one adheres to the values of reason, autonomy and individuation, one cannot ignore the powerful yearning for merger, fusion and non-differentiation in contemporary life.

34. Adorno, "Sociology and Psychology," *op.cit.*, p. 81.

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Much of the pathology of our day, individual and collective, can be traced to this yearning. With the dissolution of traditional *Sittlichkeit* into the atomicity of modern existence — and especially with the decline of religion — the individual's need to participate in something larger than himself becomes unbound and, as yet, has found no alternative social means of satisfaction. These considerations are not meant to invalidate the norms of reason. Rather, they are meant as a reminder that these deeper affective yearnings are ignored only at grave risk. Like the Furies in the *Orestia* they must be allowed their due place in a rational polity. Hegel's problematic is still with us: to do justice to the rationalist requirements of the Enlightenment, while avoiding its formalism, and to the affective requirements of the Romantics, while avoiding their irrationalism. The demands of reason must be met, but so must the demands of the heart.

In this context there is a certain one-sidedness in Habermas' position *vis-à-vis* the romantic critique of the Enlightenment or what he calls the counter-Enlightenment. Habermas is Hegelian in the sense that he proceeds through an immanent critique of his opponent which seeks to *aufheben* the truth of his opponents' position into his own theoretical construction. Thus, at various times, Habermas has "entered into the strength" of hermeneutics, systems theory, positivism, etc., and sought to incorporate the respective truths of these theories in his own position. The situation is different with respect to the counter-Enlightenment. Although Habermas has discussed them on numerous occasions, he always remains strangely *external* to their standpoint: *he never joins issue with them on their own ground so that his critique always remains incommensurate with their theoretical intentions.* The situation is even more curious in view of the fact that the thinkers of the counter-Enlightenment are much closer to Habermas, in terms of theoretical lineage, than, e.g., Luhmann or Popper.[35]

In contrast to a position that views the practical norms of the Enlightenment as basically valid and envisages socialism as the fulfillment of the modern project, the counter-Enlightenment views modernity *in toto* as a corruption to be purged through social revolution. The problems confronting the modern world cannot be solved from within. Rather, a holistic paradigm shift is required to overcome the impasse of the modern world and to establish a free society.[36]

Löwy has explored the deep affinity between libertarian utopianism and Jewish messianism.[37] The similarites stem largely from their common origins in Central Europe in the early part of the century. Such seemingly disparate thinkers as Rosenzweig, Buber, Scholem, Landauer, Kafka, Benjamin,

35. There is something compulsively modernistic about Habermas' project. It is as though he cannot seriously entertain any objections to the project of modernity for fear of opening the Pandora's box of irrationalist regressivism. After all, Heidegger was perhaps the most effective spokesman for the right counter-enlightenment in this century and, their opposition to him notwithstanding, the affinity between Heidegger and the left counter-enlightenment has often been noted. Habermas' project as a whole suffers from his inability to take the counter-enlightenment more seriously.

36. Cf. Dallmayr's discussion of the holism of the anti-humanists, *op.cit.*, p. 29.

37. Michael Löwy, "Jewish Messianism and Libertarian Utopia in Central Europe," *New German Critique*, 20 (Spring-Summer 1980), pp. 105-115.

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Bloch, Adorno and even Lukacs (despite his later Bolshevism) can all be understood as responding to the same historical development: the destruction of traditional *Gemeinschaft* culture by the advance of capitalist society. In his own particular ways, each thinker was involved in a critique of modernity.

In a discussion of Gershom Scholem, Löwy points out that, for the messianic tradition, the coming of the messiah is envisioned as a "catastrophic irruption" in history, involving an absolute abyss between the present order and the day of redemption. No tendencies can be identified in the present that might progressively unfold into redemption: "Redemption is not the product of immanent development" (Scholem). Owing to this radical hiatus, our present situation can provide no indication regarding our proximity to redemption. Indeed, some Talmudic texts go so far as to maintain that "the messiah will only come in an era of corruption and total culpability. According to the Midrash Tehelim, 'Israel asks God: When will you send us redemption?' He answers: 'when you have descended to the lowest level, at that time I shall bring you redemption.' " The worse the better. Scholem observes that today the radical project is no longer conceivable in terms of "rational utopia" but only in terms of "revolutionary apocalypse." It is no longer possible, in other words, to maintain the Enlightenment's faith in the steady development of history toward a free society.[38]

Ironically, the eschatological element in the libertarian utopians results from Weberian tendencies in their thinking. They share Weber's estimate of modern civilization as nullity as well as his diagnosis of the "iron cage." As they are committed to the nullity thesis, they must explain away all the apparent advance of modernity as pseudo-advances. Thus, it is argued that the emancipation of the subject and the differentiation of civil society are only ideological covers that obscure the reality of atomization and the dissolution of community. As Habermas puts the thesis of counter-Enlightenment: "What presents itself as progress can soon show itself to be a perpetuation of what was presumably overcome."[39] Furthermore, the conclusion libertarian utopians draw from the "iron cage" is as consistent as Weber's. If modernity is a self-reinforcing immanent totality, then it cannot be transcended from within. Any transcendence must be an eschatological irruption. Eschatology follows as logically as resignation.

If the modern world's norms are unacceptable to the libertarian utopians, what is the normative basis for their critique? They must go outside the confines of modernity, and, all protestations to the contrary notwithstanding, a strong nostalgic yearning informs the utopian sensibility:[40] in some sense, *Gemeinschaft* becomes normative. Thus, it is apparent from his attack on neo-Marxism that Bookchin, the most sophisticated contemporary libertarian utopian, takes the "organicity" of precapitalist society as normative.[41]

38. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 107.

39. Jürgen Habermas, "Consciousness-Raising or Redemptive Criticism: The Contemporaneity of Walter Benjamin," *New German Critique*, 17 (Spring 1979), p. 56.

40. Löwy points out the similarity with the Messianic tradition where "a utopian tendency aspiring to a radically new future" often draws on "a restorative tendency, oriented toward the re-establishment of a former ideal state of a lost golden age, a shattered Edenic Harmony." Cf. "Jewish Messianism and Libertarian Utopia...," *op.cit.*, p. 106.

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Bookchin recognizes no normative advance with modernity — not even a dialectics of enlightenment: modernity is nothing but dissolution. It is not accidental that Bookchin advocates the establishment of a network of decentralized "eco-communities" as part of the solution to the problems of the modern world. This amounts to going back behind the modern division of labor and system of needs and re-establishing *autarchic* communities — a perfectly logical response if one considers modernity a corruption in the first place.

Ironically, if for Bookchin there is anything progressive about modernity, it concerns the technical and not the practical sphere. Here his latent Marxism shines through. Through its development of science and technology, capitalism has created the possibility for a miniaturized, highly sophisticated technology that could provide the technical basis for decentralized, self-sufficient eco-communities. The qualitatively new nature of this technology could break the fateful link between the domination of external nature and internal nature that landed Horkheimer and Adorno in the dialectics of enlightenment. Scarcity could be conquered without paying the price of social reification and environmental destruction. While soviets plus electricity equalled socialism for Lenin, *polei* plus windmills equals anarchism for Bookchin. If humanity's detour through modern history, with all its horrors, had any *telos*, it was not to differentiate and deepen the spirit, but simply to develop the technological basis for re-establishing *Gemeinschaft* without scarcity.

It is precisely the eschatology of that earlier generation of Central European Leftists and critical theorists that Habermas seeks to correct in order to restore socialism to the status of a historical project.[42] Yet the theoretical revisions that allow Habermas to restore the historicity to critical theory's concept of emancipation are not without their price. In his important article on Benjamin, which is unusual for its political and theoretical candor, Habermas clarifies his position *vis-à-vis* the left counter-Enlightenment. He sees the counter-Enlightenment's central contribution in showing that what *often* appears as progress is only pseudo-progress, or even regression. However, the thinkers of the counter-Enlightenment proceed to draw an erroneous conclusion *that all progress is illusory* or, worse yet, "that Enlightenment itself mystifies." This, in turn, leads them to abandon theories of progressive development altogether. Habermas accepts their insight about the *dangers* of pseudo-progress but does not use it to invalidate all

41. In a discussion of Buber, he observes how capitalism "hollows out" the organic structure of premodern society: "We have used words like 'modernity' and 'industrial' society to conceal a basic difference between capitalism and precapitalist societies. In whatever ways precapitalist societies differed from each other, they differed from capitalism in the fact that they were basically *organic*, richly articulated in forms and structures that were ultimately challenged and destroyed by bourgeois market relations.... The most striking features of the capitalist market is its ability to unravel this highly textured social structure, to invade and divest earlier social forms of their complexity of human relations. Even as capitalism seems to amplify the autonomy and claims of the individual, it does so by attenuating the content and structure of society." Cf. Murray Bookchin, "Beyond Neo-Marxism," *Telos*, 36 (Summer 1978), pp. 13-14.

42. See Albrecht Wellmer, "Communications and Emancipation: Reflections on the Linguistic Turn in Critical Theory," *On Critical Theory, op.cit.*, p. 245.

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developmental theories. On the contrary, he uses it as a warning to refine those theories.[43]

For Benjamin, progress in the forces of production, social wealth and legality — perhaps the only areas where one can unambiguously speak of progress — appears pallid when compared to the enormity of human unhappiness and suffering through the ages. While not denying the magnitude of human unhappiness, Habermas argues that the counter-Enlightenment nevertheless fails to appreciate the significance of what "modest" progress has occurred:[44] "By remembering in melancholy what was unsuccessful and invoking moments of happiness that are in the process of being obliterated the historical sense of secular progress threatens to be stunted." Clearly, an improved standard of living and a modern legal structure are nothing to scoff at. Habermas' praise for the advances of modernity, however, are remarkably guarded and reserved in contrast to Marx's apotheosis of a world created by modern capitalism. Where Marx extolled progress in the most substantive cultural terms possible, pertaining to the actual conduct of life, Habermas affirms it only in the formal, even counterfactual, structures of legality and morality.[45]

At this point Habermas raises a crucial objection against himself, which many veterans of the New Left and devotées of the old Frankfurt School have been wanting to raise for some time: is his position not in danger of succumbing to a "joyless reformism whose faculties have been blunted to the difference between the improved reproduction of life and a fulfilled life?" Citing Bloch, Habermas is willing to separate the question of human dignity, which he sees as the aim of the Enlightenment, from the question of human happiness, which he sees as the aim of the utopians. Thus, he admits successful emancipation may not mean fulfillment. While he is willing to admit the possibility that a just society may not be a fulfilled one, he does not take this as an argument against working for political emancipation. It should be recalled that the New Left saw its advance over the Old Left, both communist and social democratic, precisely in its embracing of the cause of happiness. It was argued pragmatically that only by fighting for the system-breaking demand of happiness could the integrative powers of the system be broken and *both* justice and happiness achieved.

The lack of a necessary connection between emancipation and fulfillment — between an end to exploitation and an end to domination — assumes a particular form in Habermas *owing to his separation of the questions of*

43. The Benjamin essay was published one year before *Legitimation Crisis* and four years before *Toward a Reconstruction of Historical Materialism* and can be seen as containing a programmatic statement for those works. See Philip Brewster and Carl Howard Buchner, "Language and Critique: Jürgen Habermas on Walter Benjamin," *New German Critique*, 17 (Spring 1979), pp. 15-29.

44. "Consciousness-Raising or Redemptive Criticism," *op.cit.*, p. 58.

45. As Marshall Berman observes: "next to the *Communist Manifesto*, the whole body of capitalist apologetics, from Adam Ferguson to Milton Friedman, is remarkably pale and empty of life. The celebrants of capitalism tell us surprisingly little of its infinite horizons, its revolutionary energy and audacity, its dynamic creativity, its adventurousness and romance, its capacity to make men not merely more comfortable but more alive." Cf. *All That Is Solid...*, *op.cit.*, p. 98.

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*discursive validity and of substantive meaning*. A certain incommensurability exists between the arguments of Habermas and of the counter-Enlightenment on these matters. Where the counter-Enlightenment evaluates history in terms of meaning and sees only regression, Habermas judges it in terms of formal validity and sees progress.[46] The point becomes apparent in Habermas' "refutation" of Weber; for he does refute Weber, but not the Weber the counter-Enlightenment wanted to refute. If one is looking for emancipation as the resurrection of substantive meaning, Habermas' message is as disconsolate as any tough-minded *Aufklärer*.[47] In complex societies, Habermas sees the discursive adjudication of validity claims for public issues exhausting the concept of emancipation. This could, of course, be taken as a reason for decentralizing "complex" societies.

In his treatment of the "end of the individual," Habermas inadvertently gives more evidence for Horkheimer and Adorno's position than he cares to. Indeed, Habermas' discussion fails to join issues with Horkheimer and Adorno's, and his argument aims at the wrong target. To appreciate the enormous distance separating Habermas' critical theory from that of Adorno, consider the following statement: "Until now no one has succeeded in extracting the thesis of the end of the individual from the domain of the malaise and self-experience of intellectuals and made it accessible to empirical test."[48] The statement is ironic in two respects: first, Habermas knows quite well that the fact a thesis is the esoteric possession of a handful of estranged intellectuals does not count against it in Adorno's book. On the contrary, it might provide very strong evidence in its favor. Secondly, Habermas also knows that to ask for social-scientific verification for this thesis, for Adorno, would be asking to submit it to the same closed universe of discourse that produced the problem in the first place.

Habermas, however, has a point: the ideal of the autonomous individual was always alive in the early Frankfurt School, even as they were busy mourning its passing.[49] While Adorno may not have shrunk from employing

46. As Benhabib has observed, for Habermas, "even if at the substantive level the loss of meaning [*Sinnverlust*] is irreversible, at the *formal level of argumentation* the unity of reason is preserved in the very logic of those communication structures through which hypothetical validity claims can be redeemed. The search in critical theory for a utopian negation of the instrumental reason of the moderns is misguided. The new paradigm of rationality is not substantive but *discursive*; it thematizes not the *content* but the *form* of those necessary and indispensable argumentation procedures, with reference to which the validity claims of truth, justice and rightness can be settled." Cf. "Modernity and the Aporias of Critical Theory," *Telos*, 49 (Fall 1981), pp. 53-54.

47. See Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*, trans. Tom McCarthy (Boston, 1975), p. 119, and "Why More Philosophy," *Social Research*, 38:4 (Winter 1971), pp. 634-654.

48. Jürgen Habermas, "Historical Materialism and the Development of Normative Structures," *Communication and the Evolution of Society*, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston, 1979), p. 128.

49. Jürgen Habermas, "Moral Development and Ego Identity," *Communication and the Evolution of Society*, pp. 71-72. However, Adorno's relationship to the idea of the autonomous individual is a bit more problematic than Habermas presents it. Granted, Adorno continuously makes tacit reference to the idea as a quasi-normative concept in his critique of a totally dominated world. However, when he explicitly speaks about the ego, as in the discussion of Odysseus, he often speaks of it only as an agency of domination, which forcefully and compulsively holds the diffuse manifold of the self together. It appears that Adorno can only envision the unity of the self being

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the concept of the autonomous ego, he methodologically abstained from grounding it (as his conception of negative dialectics required). Habermas does not share Adorno's phobia for "false positivity" and believes he can ground the notion while avoiding the difficulties Adorno sought to avoid. Habermas maintains that only a theory of developmental logic allows one to ground basic concepts while at the same time avoiding the *aporia* of first philosophy. Thus, by elaborating a scheme of phylogenetic development upon a scheme of ontogenetic development and providing arguments to justify this controversial procedure, Habermas purports to provide a theory of the development of moral judgment for both the individual and society. The criteria in terms of which the schemes are held to be progressive are the universality and reflexivity of moral judgment. Human beings can be said to be truly human, for Habermas, to the extent that their socialization and the maintenance of their identity are linked to norms that require and are capable of public justification.

Habermas reformulates the "end of the individual" thesis within his framework as follows: "I have sought to prove that practical questions *can* be treated discursively and that it is *possible* for social scientific analysis to take the relation of norm systems to truth methodically into consideration. It is an open question whether in complex societies motive formation is actually tied to norms that require justification, or whether norm systems have lost their relation to truth."[50] This formulation has the advantage over the counter-Enlightenment's in that anthropological pessimism is not built in at the outset. The "end of the individual" becomes a testable hypothesis rather than an article of radical faith. However, as the thesis gains testability, its content subtly shifts. The crucial question for Habermas is whether the process of socialization and identity maintenance have been severed from norms that require discursive justification. If it could be shown that they had, the thesis would have been established. *But, is this definition of individuality sufficiently emphatic to satisfy the intentions of the counter-Enlightenment?* Although the normativity of socialization and identity would certainly be a necesary component of individuality, they have something far richer in mind.

As already indicated, owing to Habermas' conception of emancipation, i.e., public participation in administrative decisions, the possibility remained open that a free society would at the same time be a meaningless one. An analogous possibility arises at the level of the individual: an emancipated individual may lack a rich personality. In both cases, the possibility rises from the inner logic of his construction. When he separates validity from meaning and requires that emancipation consist only in the discursive redemption of normative validity claims, he leaves open the possibility that meaning will be excluded from freedom. He meets the demands of reason, while ignoring the demands of the heart, therby leaving open the possibility that freedom will be empty.

maintained through counter-cathexis and repression, inherently costly and ineffective procedures. He seems to lack an idea of *integration,* whereby the ego becomes enriched and strong qua flexible to the extent it integrates split-off, disparate elements into itself. He seems to lack, in other words, an appreciation of the synthetic function of the ego.

50. Jürgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis, op cit.*, pp. 117, 43.

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In a subplot to his main narrative, Habermas not only indicates the possibility of meaningless emancipation, but also points to the actual, systematic destruction of meaning in the modern world. Here he begins to address the real concerns of the counter-Enlightenment. First, in a highly uncharacteristic discussion, Habermas gives a sympathetic account of Benjamin's semantic theory, his criticisms entering only at the point where Benjamin tries to link that theory to historical materialism. Benjamin's main thesis, *for which Habermas claims there is good scientific evidence*, is that humanity's semantic capacities derive from its animal heritage. Meaning can be traced to the expressive gestures of animals. Benjamin contends that the species was endowed with a specific quantum of meaning "at the threshold of humanization," and that that quantum cannot be augmented, only transformed. The history of culture represents so many transformations of that original quantum of meaning. The question of humanity's "disembedding from nature," the *telos* of the Enlightenment, re-emerges in this context, as does the question of drives in psychoanalysis. If humanity's storehouse of meaning is somehow connected to its animal heritage, and if the "disembedding from nature" entails severing that connection, that would indeed spell an end to meaning. Our natural heritage, it appears, is not only an opponent, but also a vitalizer of culture.

These more speculative considerations aside, if meaning cannot be produced, it can, however, be destroyed. And its methodical destruction through modernization is the core issue of the counter-Enlightenment. To refute the dialectic of enlightenment, or the end of the individual, in a manner they would have found compelling, one could have to show that this systematic destruction of meaning could be abated. Habermas' treatment of the issue does not offer much reassurance. On the contrary, it provides a good deal of evidence for the counter-Enlightenment's position. He notes that earlier phases of bourgeois society relied on the still existing "residue of tradition" to legitimate itself. Thus critics of bourgeois society such as Marx could, at an earlier period, still use those traditional norms sedimented in culture. With the progressive encroachment of administrative rationality into the lifeworld, those vestiges of traditional meaning are vanishing.[51] Disregarding the question of whether meaning in general can be produced, it is certainly the case for Habermas that it *cannot be produced administratively*. The administrative rationality "non-renewably dismantles" the remnants of traditional cultural meaning and is, by its very nature, incapable of producing new meaning to replace it. The system thus experiences a meaning deficit. It remains to be seen whether the rewards of "civic privatism" will be adequate to secure social integration in the absence of compelling collective meaning. Concerning the systematic destruction of meaning, Habermas thus appears to be in at least implicit agreement with the counter-Enlightenment.

Though Habermas is eager to correct the utopianism of the counter-Enlightenment, strangely enough, a utopian element enters into his own

51. See Habermas, "The Development of Normative Structures," pp. 97-99.

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thinking and his utopianism results from the very theoretical move he makes to correct the excesses of the counter-Enlightenment. His strategy for correcting its utopianism *vis-à-vis* external nature results in his own utopianism *vis-à-vis* internal nature. It will be recalled that in order to overcome the implicit monism of Horkheimer and Adorno, and thereby avoid a dialectics of enlightenment, Habermas introduced his dualistic framework. Horkheimer and Adorno had failed to appreciate that whereas the domination of external nature proceeds through the monological imposition of instrumental reason on a heterogeneous object, the mastery of inner nature takes place through the internalization of intersubjective norms. Habermas' position, while dooming external nature to the status of an object of domination, allows for the possibility of simultaneous progress in both material and moral realms.[52]

Habermas also criticizes Kohlberg, whose findings he otherwise accepts, for not extending his scheme of moral development far enough. The culminating stage of Kohlberg's scheme corresponds to Kant's formalistic ethics, and therefore suffers from typically Kantian difficulties. That is, it takes existing needs as immutable givens and does not consider them possible objects of rational will formation. Unable to envision the rational transformation of needs, formalistic ethics tends to absolutize the conflict between inclination and understanding: "inclinations incompatible with duties must be excluded from the domain of the morally relevant and they must be suppressed."[53] Habermas argues that an additional stage is to be added to Kohlberg's developmental scheme in which the "insertion of drive potentials into the communicative structure of action" would occur and the shaping and satisfaction of needs would become a legitimate ethical activity. Here Habermas is attempting, from within the framework of communicative ethics, to do justice to the truth of hedonism, i.e., that the biologically embodied individual is entitled to happiness. Indeed, he argues that only a communicative ethics can reconcile this with the rational requirement of formal ethics.

How then does Habermas account for the mutability of the drives that would make such a stage possible? It appears he wants to infer from the fact that human needs are linguistically mediated that inner nature can be "rendered communicatively fluid and transparent" and thereby "moved into a utopian perspective."[54] If the concept of emancipation as the "participatory remodelling of administrative decision-making structures" was too meagre, this one appears too strong. Just as Kant sought to sneak God in through the back door with the postulates of pure reason, so Habermas attempts to sneak Marcuse in with the seventh stage of moral development. Language does function "as a kind of transformer"[55] that draws inner private nature into the

52. See Whitebook, "The Problem of Nature in Habermas," *op.cit.*, pp. 42ff., and Wellmer, "Communication and Emancipation," *op.cit.*, p. 245.

53. Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis, op.cit.*

54. Habermas, "Moral Development and Ego Identity," *op.cit.*, p. 93.

55. Habermas, "A Postscript to *Knowledge and Human Interest*," *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 3 (1975), p. 170.

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web of intersubjectivity, and the degree to which inner nature can be socialized remains an open historical question. It does not follow, however, from the linguisticality of the socialization process that a pre-established harmony exists between society and inner nature. Inner nature is *amenable* to linguistic mediation, but it is not itself linguistic: "a piece of unconquerable nature" [56] will remain as a *Ding an sich* in the socialization of every individual.

Habermas' move from Freud to Piaget and Kohlberg agggravates a tendency that was already present in his interpretation of Freud: a systematic undervaluation of the drives. His attempt to correct the biologism of the early Frankfurt School has led him to a cognitivism which is equally one-sided. The best psychoanalytically oriented social theory has always dwelt in the tension between cognition and affect, biology and society, etc., and it is this tension that Habermas foregoes. For example, while the mastery of inner nature proceeds through the internalization of intersubjective norms, those norms are embodied in significant love objects that the child "introjects" through extremely concrete corporeal fantasies. This process is generally accompanied by the most tempestuous feelings of love and hate. Development does not unfold with the orderliness that the rational reconstructions of cognitive psychology suggest.

56. Sigmund Freud, "Civilization and its Discontents," *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud,* Vol. XXI, trans. James Strachey (London, 1975), p. 86. Habermas' comments about the fluidity of inner nature here seem to contradict earlier remarks he made on the subject. Cf. *Legitimation Crisis, op.cit.,* p. 13.


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# NIETZSCHE AND CRITICAL THEORY*

## by Peter Pütz

After 1945 Nietzsche lost standing in Germany. Initially, his fragmentary work seemed unsuited for the clearing of the rubble; afterward, his radical views offered little help for the construction of a moderate state. Even stronger was the suspicion (unfounded) that Nietzsche had engendered fascism. Many would have liked to summon the philosopher to Nuremberg to bear the responsibility they were attempting to escape. He was judged guilty through the actions of those who had appropriated him. The harshest condemnation of Nietzsche has come from the orthodox Marxists' tribunal: they regard him as nothing less than the pre-fascist assassin of reason. Even Lukacs has been unable to provide a better judgment. While he does recognize Nietzsche's "extraordinary talent," Lukacs maintains that "Nietzsche's intellectual proximity to Hitlerism...was objectively even greater" than Bäumler and Rosenberg had imagined.[1]

Critical theory's evaluation of Nietzsche is quite different. At first glance it is surprising that the Frankfurt School even noticed him. The teachers of Horkheimer, Adorno, Habermas, and Schmidt were Kant, Hegel and Marx. At least the last two, Nietzsche considered foreign and irrelevant. What did he care about dialectics and political economy? And what did he think of Enlightenment and emancipation? Irrationalism, estheticism and vitalism have always been the labels with which his opponents did not manage to refute him, but at least used to dismiss him. From such an archival perspective, *Lebensphilosophie* seems altogether foreign to the Frankfurt School.

Since, however, critical theory does not regard foundations — even its own — as final truths and seeks to recognize valuations and their principles — again, even its own — as historically conditioned, it does not uncritically accept any of the usual portraits of Nietzsche. Thus, it does not accept the Nietzsche of Bäumler, Lukacs, or Bertram.

At first sight, critical theory seems to be closest to Bertram's interpretation of Nietzsche, for its interest is kindled by Nietzsche's personal, exemplary fate. Along with so many others born around the turn of the century, Benjamin and Adorno cannot escape the fascination of this intellectual and personal tragedy. Benjamin mentions sensing Nietzsche's presence in the landscape of Engadin when he stayed there while he was 19 years old.[2] More than half a century later, Adorno traveled to Sils Maria and mentioned

*Originally published in *Nietzsche Studien*, Vol. 3 (1974), pp. 175-191. Translated by David J. Parent.

1. Georg Lukacs, *Die Zerstörung der Vernunft,* in *Werke*, Vol. 9 (Neuwied, 1962), p. 330, and p. 336.

2. Cf. Walter Benjamin, *Briefe,* ed. Gershom Scholem and Theodor W. Adorno (Frankfurt, 1966), vol. I, pp. 30ff.

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feeling Nietzsche's lingering presence in the landscape. Together with Marcuse, Adorno also visited the last survivor there to have seen Nietzsche.[3] The young Benjamin acknowledged that Nietzsche demanded "the heroic... unreservedly,"[4] and labelled the correspondence with Overbeck "shaking."[5] However, he did not uncritically transfer his high esteem of Nietzsche to his writings: the "Case of Wagner" had inspired him, "something which, on the whole, I cannot say about all of Nietzsche's writings that I know."[6] This mixed judgment merges with the shock of the life of someone who philosophized himself to death. Stefan George and Thomas Mann[7] had very similar images of Nietzsche. It is clear from Benjamin's letters that in the late 1920s and especially in the 1930s, Nietzsche lost importance for him. Benjamin's adherence to Marxism, however, did not lead him to an uncritical condemnation. As late as 1932 he wrote to Scholem that in his recent review of Podach's books he had "not finalized"[8] his judgment of Nietzsche. In this review, published March 18, 1932, in *Literarische Welt*, Benjamin attacked Elisabeth Förster and her Nietzsche archive. He quited Friedländer's *bon mot* about "the notorious sister of the world-renowned brother" and called the archive an example of "provincial philistinism." He protested against the falsifications of Nietzsche's literary remains and the macabre birthday celebrations during which the sick man was supposedly shown behind an open curtain sitting on a chair and dressed in a toga. Although, as he wrote in the letter, the review is not a definitive judgment on Nietzsche, it reflects respect for his stature, which is separated by an abyss from "the Philistinism... dominating the Nietzsche archive."[9]

In Horkheimer's essays published during the 1930s in the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, less reference is made to Nietzsche's personality than to his work. "Nietzsche is the only great mind who, in view of the severe thickening of the fog which set in in the middle of the last century, has gained freedom from illusions and an overview which is accessible from the positions of the grand bourgeoisie."[10] Horkheimer, however, quickly added that Nietzsche did not see the basis of what he fought against, i.e., the structure of the social totality.

Of all the critical theorists, Adorno was closest to Nietzsche. He regarded "Kant, Hegel, and Nietzsche as the most important representatives of grand

3. Theodor W. Adorno, "Aus Sils Maria," in *Ohne Leitbild — Parva Aesthetica* (Frankfurt, 1967), pp. 49ff.

4. Walter Benjamin to Carla Seligson, April 30, 1913, in *Briefe, op.cit.*, vol. I, p. 47.

5. Walter Benjamin to Gerhard Scholem, December 23, 1917, in *ibid.*, p. 163.

6. Walter Benjamin to Ernst Schoen, January 29, 1919, *ibid.*, p. 205.

7. Cf. my "Nietzsche und Stefan George," in *Stefan George Kolloquium*, ed. Eckhard Heftrich, Paul Gerhard Klussmann, Hans Joachim Schrimpf (Cologne, 1971), pp. 49-58; and "Thomas Mann und Nietzsche," in *Thomas Mann und die Tradition*, ed. Peter Pütz (Frankfurt, 1971), pp. 225-249.

8. Walter Benjamin to Gerhard Scholem, June 1, 1932, in *Briefe, op.cit.*, vol. II, p. 554.

9. Walter Benjamin, "Nietzsche und das Archiv seiner Schwester" in *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Hella Tiedemann-Bartels (Frankfurt, 1971), vol. III, pp. 323ff.

10. Max Horkheimer, *Kritische Theorie*, ed. Alfred Schmidt (Frankfurt, 1968), vol. I, p. 274.

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philosophy." [11] In *Aesthetische Theorie* he frequently referred to Nietzsche's observations on aesthetics and cultural history. While he objected to particular issues, overall he regarded Nietzsche's genius and his "capacity to differentiate" to be "greater than all of his contemporaries." [12] A deeper cause of Adorno's appreciation appears in the following aside: "Nietzsche, whose domineering tone Spengler constantly imitates without ever disassociating himself, as Nietzsche did, from complicity with the world. . . ." [13] That he radically shunned complicity with the world was an attitude he shared with Adorno, and both fought against every conformist and positivistic philosophy.

Nietzsche's proximity to critical theory is also evident in categories and attitudes that Adorno shares with Nietzsche. Thus, in *Metakritik der Erkenntnistheorie,* Adorno expressed appreciation for the long overdue acknowledgement that ontology has always been conceived idealistically: "Husserl candidly conceded this in the *Cartesian Meditations.*" [14] No one appreciated "honesty" as the pre-eminent drive of cognition more than Nietzsche did. He frequently designated it as the only one of the highest virtues left to us. [15] He finds it lacking among Socratic as well as Christian values, and he equates it with the highest "passion of knowledge." [16] Despite considerable critical reservations, Habermas also does not conceal respect for Nietzsche: in his *Knowledge and Human Interests* he states: "Nietzsche is one of the few contemporaries who combines a sense for the significance of methodological investigations with the capacity to move nimbly in the realm of self-reflection." [17]

What is most interesting is at what point in their writings critical theorists refer to Nietzsche. Often he is cited casually. Nowhere does he stand at the beginning of a train of thought, as the source of a hypothesis or an axiom. Nietzsche is most unsuited for presuppositions. Rather, he comes in at the end of some arguments: Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* does indeed end with disquisitions on the culture industry and anti-Semitism in the 20th century, but these last chapters seem to be appendices. The development of a self-individuating consciousness begins in antiquity (*The Odyssey*) and culminates in the bourgeois-enlightened 18th and 19th centuries. De Sade and Nietzsche write the last chapters of this dubious *Bildungsroman.* They are the marsh marigolds of a failing enlightenment. Habermas concludes *Knowledge and Human Interests* with a chapter on

11. Theodor W. Adorno, *Vorlesung zur Einleitung in die Erkenntnistheorie* (Frankfurt, n.d.), p. 43.

12. Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetische Theorie*, in *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt, 1970), vol. VII, p. 303.

13. Theodor W. Adorno, "Spengler. . . ," in *Prisms* (London, 1967), p. 65.

14. Theodor W. Adorno, "The Metacritique of Epistemology," *Telos,* 38 (Winter 1978-79), p. 80.

15. *The Philosophy of Nietzsche* (New York, 1927), pp. 28, 324, 531ff.

16. *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche,* ed. Oscar Levy (Edinburgh and London, 1911), vol. IX, p. 340. Manfred Kaempfert demonstrates that honesty as truthfulness has a Christian origin in his *Säkularisation und neue Heiligkeit — Religiöse und religionsbezogene Sprache bei Friedrich Nietzsche* (Berlin, 1971), pp. 181ff.

17. Jürgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests* (Boston, 1972), p. 189.

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"Freud and Nietzsche,"[18] and toward the end of *Negative Dialectics*, under the heading "nihilism,"[19] Adorno has an intensive discussion of Nietzsche. These locations at the end of discussions characterize the author of *Twilight of Idols* as a philosopher of the end and perhaps of a new beginning. Despite all the differences between critical theory and existential philosophy, there is at least a formal congruence in the historical evaluation of Nietzsche. For Heidegger as well, Nietzsche is the last representative and, at the same time, the critic of Western metaphysics which, since Socrates and Plato, has fallen into an increasing "distance from being" (*Seinsferne*).[20] Critical theory and existentialism do justice to Nietzsche's self-understanding: he considered himself the philosopher of the "high noon" of crises and transition (cf. the metaphors of beyond, the bridge, passage, superman, etc). It is not Hegel but Nietzsche who is the Owl of Minerva that begins its flight at dusk.

Two excurses in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* mark the start and the apex of reason's drive toward total autonomy. Odysseus, the most cunning and reasonable of all Greeks, is calculating in a double sense. He demonstrates man's departure from a state of myth-dominated immaturity, and his victory over Polyphemus is a first step in the emancipation of the exclusively rational individual. Kant also furthers this process of enlightenment when he defines the ideal of understanding freed from external guidance, thereby denying the interests (religion, morality) in whose service cognition had previously stood. In contrast, according to Horkheimer and Adorno, Kant posits "the bourgeois individual freed from tutelage."[21] A science so conceived no longer reflects on itself, its impulses, goals and interests, which it flatly contradicts. Reason has become "purposeless purposiveness"[22] and "science is not conscious of itself; it is only a tool."[23] The mathematization and mechanization of science lead to the domination of facts and nature, to ever refined contrivances for self-preservation and entrepreneurship, but it prevents calling science into question from an epistemological standpoint. The "why" is completely repressed for the sake of the "how." "Its canon is its own brutal efficiency"[24] which literally steps over corpses. Thus, Horkheimer and Adorno see a direct line from Kant's critique of reason to Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*. Reason, which took its bearing from the "yardstick of survival,"[25] could only assert the law of the stronger. The weak have themselves to blame and are guilty for, according to Nietzsche, it is the illnesses that are "man's great dangers: not the wicked, not the beasts of prey."[26] Thus, Nietzsche "abrogates the law through self-legislation."[27]

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 274-300.
19. Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics* (New York, 1973), pp. 376ff.
20. Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche* (Pfullingen, 1961).
21. Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (New York, 1972), p. 86.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 89.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 85.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 86.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 99.
26. *The Philosophy of Nietzsdche,* p. 748.
27. Horkheimer and Adorno, *op.cit.*, p. 115.

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Nietzsche has pushed the idea of the enlightenment to the limit and to its reversal. He obscured nothing, but cried to the world that no argument against murder could be deduced from unfettered reason. Like critical theory, he recognized that enlightenment had turned into its opposite, and he then attempted to master chaos with an exaggerated individualism. In contrast to positivism, he took science at its word and drew the radical conclusion that the only law recognized by reason is the will to power. With this awareness, he destroyed the dominant, hypocritical morality and announced candidly and brutally the value of power alone. According to Horkheimer and Adorno, he thus demonstrated the utopia of a humanity "which, itself no longer distorted, has no further need to distort." [28]

Habermas attributes a similar role to Nietzsche. In *Knowledge and Human Interests* he traces the process whereby epistemology becomes mere theory of science. As such, it directs its attention only to the instrument and not to the conditions for the possibility of its own activity. This path leads from Kant through Fichte, Hegel and Marx up to positivism which, according to Habermas, also dominates our present conception of knowledge. It is marked by the will to purportedly "pure" truth, that will allow only the "thing itself" to speak, as it were, only "for itself." Such objectivism is incapable of perceiving the subjective side of every cognitive act: the "rational interest" guiding cognition (a concept in Kant and Fichte) remains incomprehensible to it. Only by means of reflection on the theory of knowledge is it possible to reach the fundamental relation between knowledge and interest. *"Reason is conceived as interested in the act of self-reflection."* [29] Here, interest is not something incidental and external that is forced upon cognition. Rather, there is a two-fold side to reflection: reason is guided by interest and interest is rational. Habermas shows that, already with Kant, and even more clearly with Fichte, the "need for emancipation and an originally completed act of freedom" are presuppositions for all logic, "so that man elevates himself to the idealist standpoint of autonomy and responsibility." [30] Practical reason is a stimulus to pure reason.

According to Habermas, this connection has been consigned to oblivion in post-Kantian philolsophy. Comte declared the bankruptcy of self-reflection when he ascribed rigorous scientific validity only to empirically proven results and saw the most important progress in the overcoming of metaphysics. The author of the *Gay Science* stands at the end of the road of positivism. According to Habermas, "Nietzsche carried to its end the self-abolition of epistemology, inaugurated by Hegel and continued by Marx, arriving at the self-denial of reflection." [31] Though Nietzsche saw the connection of cognition and interest, he psychologized it. Though his insight that knowledge was in the service of the will to power was critical, it did not liberate; "it is not emancipatory but nihilistic." [32] On the one hand he stands in the

28. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
29. Habermas, *op.cit.*, p. 212.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 206.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 204.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 205.

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Enlightenment tradition that rigidified into factual science; on the other hand, he can no longer accept the latter as science because, positivistically, it denies its cognitive interest and thereby has separated itself from the context of life. According to Habermas, this is particularly evident in Nietzsche's invectives against history as a merely preservative science in his second "Untimely Consideration."

As he does for Horkheimer and Adorno, Nietzsche stands for Habermas also at the end of a process in which enlightenment, contrary to its own intentions, degenerated into a mere instrument of domination of nature and of man. With his "God is dead," Nietzsche also buries metaphysics and thus brings positivism to consummation. Yet, at the same time, he recognizes it as a bad conscience. According to Habermas, Nietzsche frustrates the possibility of refuting positivism through self-reflection by his considerations that validate equally all standpoints insofar as they serve the satisfaction of vital needs.

Schmidt also ascribes to the thesis that Nietzsche has recognized the self-abrogation of enlightenment.[33] In contrast to positivism, Nietzsche saw through the error of a sharp epistemological separation of subject and object. He likewise turned against the basic identity of thought and being, and understood that the relation of subject and object is forever historically determined anew, namely on the basis of determinate existing conditions, interests and valuations.

Thus, Nietzsche had recognized the dialectic of enlightenment long before the rise of critical theory without taking the road back to nature with the help of Rousseau. Already in his early work, *The Birth of Tragedy,* he described the consequences of self-individuating consciousness, illustrating it through the example of a one-dimensionally fixed and crippled life. He calls man obsessed by unchained reason "theoretical man" and identifies his ancestor: "Our entire modern world is caught in the net of Alexandrinian culture and takes as its ideal the *theoretical man* equipped with the highest cognitive powers in the service of science; his prototype and ancestor is Socrates."[34] For Nietzsche, Plato's teacher already represents all of the important attributes and virtues of the enlightenment: morality, dialectics, satisfaction and serenity.[35] The self-restriction to what can be proven generates the illusion of the total malleability of the world and therefore man's power over others and over nature. This resulted in an optimism lasting centuries, concerning enlightenment and theoretical man who deemed his deformity to be superior. Nietzsche analyzes not only the consequences for the individual theoretical man, but also for the entire theoretical society. He says of the cheerfulness of the Enlightenment "that it considers dissolving myth; that instead of metaphysical consolation it posits earthly concord, nay its own *deus ex*

33. Cf. Alfred Schmidt, "Zur Frage der Dialektik in Nietzsches Erkenntnistheorie," in *Zeugnisse – Theodor W. Adorno zum sechzigsten Geburtstag,* ed. Max Horkheimer (Frankfurt, 1963), pp. 115-132.

34. *The Philosophy of Nietzsche, op.cit.,* p. 1046.

35. *Ibid.,* p. 867.

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*machina,* namely the god of machines and crucibles, i.e., the forces of the natural spirits acknowledge and utilized in the service of a higher egotism; that it believes in a cure for the world through knowledge, in a life guided by science, and is really capable of binding the individual to a very narrow circle of solvable tasks."[36] Here we see unfolded the entire dialectic of enlightenment: enlightenment destroys the old myths but falls back into a new one. It is rational but its relation to reason is based on faith. By applying reason, i.e., through science, it wants constantly to improve the world and ennoble the individual. Furthermore, Nietzsche recognizes the connection between enlightenment and bourgeois-industrial economic structure. The *deus ex machina* becomes a machine, philosophy is turned into technology and labor — the exploitation of nature and man for the purpose of an egoistic increase of property and power. Here critical theory need not illuminate Nietzsche, who himself radiates sufficient light.

Half a century before the rise of critical theory, Nietzsche recognized the historical dialectic of enlightenment. This knowledge, however, is not limited to its historical appearance in the 18th century but is expanded to a consideration of all of history and, finally, to the decisive viewpoint of the historicity of all subjects and concepts — Nietzsche's "Heraclitism."[37] In this sense, too, he is a precursor of critical theory, which wishes, for example, to extend the analyses of Marx and Engels, particularly from political economy. Yet, it does not consider the categories found there to be eternally valid truths, but treats them as impulses for thought processes, the results of which devolve back on the categories, changing them if need be. Since critical theory renounces all ahistorical doctrine, it is difficult to define it. Instead, it reconstitutes itself continuously in debates with opposing positions. As such, it represents the primacy of history over all ontology and anthropology, which want to know supratemporal essences. It understands history not merely as the history of ideas but as the constantly changing relation of all individuals, groups, strata and classes in their social totality.

In his essay "Traditional and Critical Theory" (1937), Horkheimer set forth the epistemological foundation for investigating that totality. He sees the starting point for traditional theory in Descartes, in whose wake the generally accepted method has been to deduce related theorems from the fewest possible principles considered indubitable. Consequently, science has been turned into mathematics without a consideration of the cognitive role played by subjectivity (position of the knowing subject, his interest, his historical determinacy, etc.). The rigorous separation of subject and object leads, on the one hand, to a high degree of control over objects and, on the other, to the alienation of the subject passively participating in cognition. Although every fact, however objective it may appear, is always co-determined by the subject, traditional theory denies the participation of the subject and thereby deprives it of its reward. In contrast, critical theory maintains that "the objects we perceive in our surroundings — cities, villages, fields and woods —

36. *Ibid.*, p. 1045.
37. Schmidt, *op.cit.*, p. 125.

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bear the mark of having been worked on by man. It is not only in clothing and appearance, in outward form and emotional makeup that men are the products of history. Even the way they see and hear is inseparable from the social life-process as it has evolved over the millenia."[38] Historicity determines both parties in the cognitive process: the object as well as the subject has become, i.e., has been created. The perceiver molds the things and is in turn molded by things; here lies the starting point for critical theory's materialism. This materialism has appealed to various contents throughout the history of philosophy: Democritus to atoms, the French *Aufklärer* (Helvetius, Lametrie, Holbach) to causal mechanisms, and Feuerbach to the concrete individual in his sensuous constitution and need for happiness. For critical theory, the content of this materialism means: the socio-economic totality, which implies historicity. Since socio-economic reality is constantly changing, no supratemporal principle can be derived from it. The historical process is likewise not predetermined by a fixed dialectical schema, and for critical theory even materialism as a construct is not an imperishable law. "That social being determines consciousness is not a philosophical credo for critical thought but the diagnosis of a condition to be overcome."[39] Elsewhere, Schmidt provides a summary — assuming one can be provided at all: "If there is anything that can define critical theory, it is this relentless reflection of its conditional nature."[40]

In his *Drei Studien zu Hegel,* Adorno speaks out against the materialist dialectics in the "Eastern Zone" — a version frozen into *Diamat,* in which form it was "distorted into a static, literal dogma." According to Adorno, "In opposition to this, there are more points of contact with the motivating experience of dialectics to be found, long after Hegel, in Nietzsche's statement: nothing happens in reality that would strictly correspond to logic."[41] Elsewhere Adorno states that Nietzsche had realized that "everything truly historical basically eludes definition altogether."[42]

For this we have unequivocal evidence in Nietzsche's writings: in *The Twilight of the Idols* he reproaches philosophers for their "lack of historical sense" and continues: "They believe that they *honor* a thing when they dehistoricize it — *sub specie aeterni* — when they turn it into a mummy. For millenia, all things that philosophers have handled have been conceptual mummies."[43] In his *Aesthetische Theorie,* Adorno confirms Nietzsche's view that only what has become (*das Gewordene*) would be true.[44] Marcuse argues along similar lines: "Neither the most subtle esthetic sense nor the most exact philosophical concepts are immune from history. Disorderly concepts enter

38. Horkheimer, *Critical Theory: Selected Essays,* trans. M.J. O'Connell *et al.* (New York, 1972), p. 200.
39. Alfred Schmidt, "Nachwort des Herausgebers: Zur Idee der kritischen Theorie," in Horkheimer, *Kritische Theorie, op.cit.,* vol. II, p. 358.
40. *Ibid.,* p. 357.
41. Theodor W. Adorno, *Drei Studien zu Hegel* in *Gesammelte Schriften,* ed. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt, 1970), vol. V, p. 314.
42. Theodor W. Adorno, *Vorlesung zur Einleitung in die Erkenntnistheorie, op.cit.,* p. 55.
43. *The Portable Nietzsche,* ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York, 1979), pp. 479ff.
44. Cf. Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetische Theorie, op.cit.,* p. 12.

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into the purest subjects of thought." In that connection he mentions the "liberating air of Nietzsche's thought," which breaks through law and order.[45]

Nietzsche's contributions to knowledge lie in his philosophical avoidance of an inadequate system, in his rejection of dogmatism, and in his denial of positivism. All three, "avoidance, rejection and denial," are negative modes of thought and behavior. As a result, Nietzsche's contemporaries and posterity have reproached him with nihilism, the same accusation he had raised against theoretical man and Christianity, because they renounced the body and the will to life. Those attacked avenged themselves by turning the tables. As Nietzsche accepted *nothing* of the values and truths they offered, they reprimanded him as a nihilist. Since then he has been considered both an *enfant terrible* and a class enemy. In *Negative Dialectics,* Adorno opposes this verdict and turns the tables once more: "Those persons are nihilists who confront nihilism with their already exhausted positivities. . . . Respect for the idea of nihilism lies in the defense of what has been censured as nihilism." [46] Adorno asks whether the condition in which we can no longer adhere to anything would not be the most humane one, because it allows for a degree of human self-determination conceivable only in the boldest dreams of philosophy. Nietzsche first opens up the perspective of man's absolute autonomy, but then questions whether the realization of such autonomy is altogether advisable. With this second thought, Nietzsche slips into a nihilism that would be supplanted by autonomy if his first position were solely valid. Nietzsche's nihilism and critical theory agree in the reflective denial of every finality; negativity, in the service of thought, contains more love of truth than any truth itself. In his essay on Nietzsche's epistemology, Schmidt states: "The provisional truths that cannot be systematized are negative: they are insights into the untruth and uncertainty of truths, and certainties up to now. . . . Such insight makes Nietzsche's method an 'experimental philosophy.' " [47]

Nietzsche's and Adorno's mode of thinking also marks the inner and outer form of their writings. They have nothing in common with the systematic character of the *Critique of Pure Reason* or *Being and Time.* Instead of deduction and mathematical analysis, Nietzsche and Adorno prefer the more essayistic form without any distinct division into chapters and subdivisions. Intermediate headings are frequently absent, and when they do occur they are subsequently suppressed because they destroy a continuity considered more important. The editors of *Aesthetische Theorie* rightly refer to a "paratactic form of representation," [48] which one also finds in Nietzsche. The sections need not be read in the sequence in which they have been printed; one section is not necessarily built on the other. The thoughts often circle around central statements in the form of aperçus and aphorisms. Their books

45. Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man* (Boston, 1967), p. 216.
46. Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics, op.cit.,* p. 381.
47. Schmidt, "Zur Frage der Dialektik in Nietzsches Erkenntnistheorie," *op.cit.,* p. 121 and 123.
48. "Editorisches Nachwort" to Adorno, *Aesthetische Theorie, op.cit.,* p. 541.

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give the impression of stones forever being thrown into a lake forming various large rings simultaneously and sequentially, which at times lie side by side, at times tangentially, and at times flow into one another. But all of the stones move one and the same water.

Despite the affinity between critical theory and Nietzsche, the divergences are unmistakable. They burst open mostly at the end of a process of reflection that for a distance has run parallel. Two reproaches have repeatedly been raised against him: that he did not engage in dialectics and did not recognize the fundamental importance of society. Objections have been raised against the inadequacy of Nietzsche's dialectics by Adorno and Schmidt. [49] In *Aesthetische Theorie*, Nietzsche's awareness of the incompatibility of art and positivism is reiterated. Yet, "he allowed the contradiction to remain undeveloped." [50] Even more evident is the reservation in the *Metakritik der Erkenntnistheorie*. Here Adorno cites Nietzsche, who argues against Plato's dichotomy of eternal being and transient phenomena. In the *Symposium,* the historicity of *doxa* is ascribed to appearance. Nietzsche sees the error of this metaphysic of being in that the ultimate truth, the perfect, must not have become but must be *causa sui.* He then continues: "The ultimate, the most flimsy, the emptiest, is posited as the First, as Cause in itself, as *ens realissimum.*" [51] Adorno agrees when Nietzsche turns against dehistorization and the total domination of the concept of the permanent, but he does not concur when Nietzsche ascribes the permanent as an arbitrary law, only to the concept and takes nature to be a rolling chaos. According to Nietzsche, this constitutes an undialectical separation and affirmation, whereby becoming is attributed only to nature and being only to the concept. For Adorno, Nietzsche destroyed the traditional metaphysics of the eternal but, through his unequal division of roles, he introduced a new dichotomy between nature as change and the concept as permanence. Adorno wants to see the two sides mediated and therefore continues the dialectic: "The opposition of the stable to the chaotic and the domination of nature would never have succeeded without an element of stability in the dominated, which otherwise would incessantly give the lie to the subject. Completely casting away that element and localizing it solely in the subject is no less hubris than absolutizing the schemata of a conceptual order. In both cases, subject and object, as already congealed, are made into the *υποχειμενον.*" [52]

Nietzsche's relation to dialectics is a complex one. He himself employs the term in the sense of "formal logic" or "rhetoric," and he judges dialectics in various ways. In his middle period, when he gave philosophy precedence over art, dialectics is extolled as the fencing technique of discourse and as divine art. [53] In the late period, it is downgraded to the "revenge of the rabble" and "lawyers' tricks." [54] When Schmidt claims that "the movement of Nietzsche's

49. Schmidt, "Zur Frage der Dialektik in Nietzsches Erkenntnistheorie," *op.cit.*, p. 125.
50. Adorno, *Aesthetische Theorie, op.cit.*, p. 418.
51. *The Portable Nietzsche, op.cit.*, pp. 480ff.
52. Adorno, "The Metacritique of Epistemology," *op.cit.*, p. 88.
53. *Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche, op.cit.*, vol. IX, pp. 196, 374.
54. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Werke in drei Bänden,* ed. Karl Schlechta (Munich, 1956), vol. III,

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thought is dialectical," [55] it needs qualification. It is correct if it is based on Hegel's definition: "The *reasonable* in the concept stands out in their fixed precision and differentiation from others; the *dialectic* shows them in their transition and their dissolution." [56] In this sense, Nietzsche too is a dialectician. But he is not one in terms of the vehicle of that "dissolution" in Hegel and Marx: Nietzsche's thought is not propelled by contradiction. Had he been able to read Adorno, he would probably be surprised at how often in the latter things reverse into their opposite. With a malicious innocence he may have asked: Why must everything really turn into its opposite? Why not sometimes into its diagonal? What legitimizes this fundamental, orderly love for antitheses? While they are factors of movement and mediation, they are, as such, always overcome and removed. But as a ceaselessly operating moving force, they threaten to mechanize the movement of thought -- something that critical theory fears more than anything else. Nietzsche considers the contradiction to be a construction of the understanding: "There are no contradictions: we acquire the concept of contradiction only from logic, whence it was erroneously transferred to things." [57] Here Adorno could retort that Nietzsche once more ascribed something fixed only to the subject and not to objects, and that thereby he himself reintroduced a contradiction he earlier denied. To this, in turn, it can be countered that Nietzsche considered this condition of separation not as definitive but as worthy of overcoming. Just as things do not mutually exclude one another, in thought also the principle of gliding and not of antithesis should dominate: "General inexact observation sees contradictions everywhere in nature (such as, for example, 'hot and cold'), where there are no contradictions but only gradations. This bad habit has induced us to wish to understand and analyze even internal nature, the intellectual-moral world, according to such contradictions. Untold pain, arrogance, rigidity, alienation, deathly coldness have thus suffused human feeling for the reason that one believed in seeing contradictions instead of transitions." [58] Nietzsche is a dialectician in Hegel's sense, insofar as he shows concepts in their "transition and dissolution." His cognitive procedure is therefore not thinking in contradictions but perspectivism. The attempt to conceive an intended phenomenon in its totality fails and is thrown back to relative individual statements which, as such, are open to criticism from others. Through a change in perspective, the phenomenon appears in ever new nuances which confirm or contradict the prevoius ones. To begin with, such a perspectival viewpoint makes individual judgments relative, but at the same time keeps them from a one-sided ossification and holds the eye free for the intended totality. This totality is not in fact reached, but perspectival cognition gropes fairly close to it. "There is *only* a perspectival seeing, *only* a

p. 760 and *The Philosophy of Nietzsche, op.cit.*, p. 385.

55. Schmidt, "Zur Frage der Dialektik in Nietzsches Erkenntnistheorie," *op.cit.*, p. 116.

56. Georg Friedrich Wilhelm Hegel, *Philosophische Propädeutik* in *Sämtliche Werke,* ed. Hermann Glockner (Stuttgart, 1927), vol. III, p. 170.

57. Nietzsche, *Werke in drei Bänden, op.cit.*, vol. III, p. 541.

58. *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche, op.cit.*, vol. VII, p. 231.

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perspectival 'perception'; and *the more* affects we allow to be articulated about a thing, *the more* eyes, different eyes, we know how to involve in the same thing, the fuller becomes the 'concept' of this thing, our 'objectivity.' " [59] It is not antithetical thought but above all perspectivism that comprehends transitions, contacts and parallel congruencies, half tones, fifty-fifty situations, and mixed characters. Nietzsche considers perspectivism to be the more painful way, but intellectually more honest.

Nietzsche's perspectivism, in which Habermas sees only a "plurality of fictions relative to multiple standpoints" and a "manifold of what in principle can be a number of perspectives," [60] also leads to the second decisive point in which critical theory conflicts with Nietzsche. The allegedly random interchangeability of perspectives and positions prevents Nietzsche from gaining insight into the comprehensive meaning of society. According to Horkheimer, he was wrong in his critique of nihilism, because he had viewed the concept ahistorically and because he had failed to recognize that nihilism "is either surmounted by society in general or not at all." [61] When Nietzsche wants to name the comprehensive context in which all perspectives are based, he uses the concept or rather the metaphor "life." This is not to be misunderstood biologically but aims at the totality. Critical theory reproaches Nietzsche for not having seen social totality as the true base. Now, it is difficult to name a phenomenon that could be thought of outside that totality. The reason for this lies in the universality of the concept "social totality." In spite of the consideration of diffuse forces, unbounded and, therefore, in the end unclear motivations and intentions, the term "social totality" does suggest something like a universal network of relations. Therefore, one often refers to the "total context of social relations" without it being decided whether or not this context prevails or exists at all. Without concrete information, which critical theory does not for the time being furnish, the concept of "social totality" — like Nietzsche's "life" — serves a mythologizing function. It owes its truth only to its universality. Here it might be objected that "society" is more concrete than "life" and that for Neitzsche "life" in the sense of "being" is more than "society." But for critical theory, "society" is more than "life." According to its theory of knowledge, the total context of social relations comprises not only life, but also nature, and even talk of God, etc.

But as long as society is thought about in such universalistic terms, everyone who wants to know and act stands before it as in front of a sphinx. Although developed and made, society presents itself to the individual as not made by *him,* as an impenetrable jungle of interests, as a socialized fate. How can this be remedied? Perhaps, by untangling the entanglement through togetherness instead of antagonism, through solidarity? Critical theory resembles Nietzsche's thought both in the radicality of the questions as well as in the refusal of an answer.

59. *Philosophy of Nietzsche, op.cit.,* p. 745.

60. Habermas, *op.cit.,* p. 151. Habermas attempts a more developed interpretation of the "perspectivist theory of the affects" in his afterword to Friedrich Nietzsche, *Erkenntnistheoretische Schriften* (Frankfurt, 1968), pp. 347ff.

61. Horkheimer, *Kritische Theorie, op.cit.,* vol. II, p. 68.

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# SYMPOSIUM: THE ROLE OF THE INTELLECTUAL IN THE 1980S

In January the following question was sent out to *Telos* editors and some of the journal's fellow travelers. Of the 38 individuals questioned, 21 replied. The responses are printed below essentially in the order they were received. — *David Gross*

*Question: As leftist intellectuals of one type or another we find ourselves in a decade which seems very distant from — and very different than — the 1960s which shaped most of us. The "Movement" in relation to which we originally thought and wrote has apparently disappeared, or at least receded from view. Critically theorizing about society, which once seemed so important because it would explain the world to itself and make it "dance to its own tune," now appears to be only theory again since it reaches no "material base." We experience ourselves thinking in one direction while living in the midst of a refractory reality that moves in another. Inertia or the force of circumstances has compelled many of us to retreat from direct political involvement on the ground that there is nothing happening now that is worth the commitment of time and energy. Some of us are housed in colleges or universities though initially we had no great ambition for, and sometimes even contempt for, the academic life.*

*In light of these developments, a question that has undoubtedly never been far from our minds needs to be asked again: What exactly is the role of the intellectual in the 1980s? How should the intellectual define himself under present conditions, and what should he take to be his task or tasks* vis-à-vis *contemporary American society?*

*Paul Piccone:* In spite of a discontinuity in the history of the U.S. Left created by the Cold War and the McCarthy repression — a gap that resulted in collective amnesia and necessitated a slow reacquaintance in the late 1960s with the political experiences and traditions of the previous half century — the New Left still implicitly assumed a neo-Leninist understanding of the role of radical intellectuals. Of course, with the exception of its irrelevant and dangerous Marxist-Leninist factions, the generation of '68 did not accept the Bolshevik model of the party and never related to the rest of society in the manipulative and vangardist fashion of Leninists. Yet, young intellectuals still saw their role as primarily *mediational.* The representation of emancipatory interests, the development of new modes of struggle, lifestyles, and perspectives, and the privileged access to knowledge and information, uneasily located the New Left within the otherwise dismissed Leninist tradition.

The collapse of the New Left in the early 1970s produced, as one of its main epiphenomena, three typical reactions against the traditional understanding of the role of radical intellectuals. Some impatient New Leftists became irresistibly attracted to the ready-made solutions and quick answers provided by Marxism-Leninism, thus dissipating their remaining energies in sectarian mini-party politics before completely burning out and fading into mainstream consumer culture. Others became disenchanted with the intellectuals' pretense to grasp the totality or have better access to truth and reality, and slipped into a nihilistic nominalism, best exemplified by the anti-theoretical flickerings of the French new philosophers. And still others dug up the ruins of earlier theories of intellectuals as a new class, provided them with dubious new epistemological underpinnings (e.g., sociolinguistics) and reinvented the class

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struggle, this time resulting not in a dictatorship of the proletariat, but in the equally suspect and unlikely rule of intellectuals.

The problem with the first reaction was that it assumed American society to have remained essentially as Northern Europe had been prior to World War I, thus overlooking the New Deal's social policy of integrating all opposition through the culture industry, state-regulated labor relations, the restructuring of the production process, and consumerism. As a result, a few wooden intellectuals (mostly unacquainted with the history of the Left, or with radical theory, because of an unacknowledged though deep-seated anti-intellectualism) still sought an evanescent proletariat to enlighten and to lead to class confrontation. On the whole, this group of formerly radical intellectuals has long since ceased to be either radical — because of their uncritical adherence to authoritarian ideologies — or intellectual — since all answers for them are already in principle assumed to be at hand, thus ruling out the need for further inquiry into fundamental premises.

The second group also self-destroyed to the extent that it rejected as totalitarian any totalizing concept or theory. This left no role for intellectuals other than as critical snipers, parasitic on the perseverance of otherwise distrusted theories advancing universal claims, or else as last resort defenders of particularity and otherness. It is no accident that these people tended to gravitate towards journalism and away from theory, and focus more on passing fads rather than on social dynamics.

The third group is by far the most interesting. It demystified the mediational function of intellectuals, particularized their reified universal claims and, on the basis of a vision of an increasingly more complex technological society, hypostatized the intellectuals' role as central and indispensable for social organization. Attractive as it may appear because of the frankness of its analysis and the formidable historical evidence it reconstitutes to substantiate its claims, this account suffers from fundamental flaws. First of all, ownership of cultural capital — a suggestive but highly misleading metaphor for knowledge — does not sift out the intellectuals as a separate social class since, whatever one may mean by this term, in order to have meaningful social and political consequences, a class must be totalized by a common aim and a determining social role. Intellectuals in the strict sense have neither. Secondly, political power is constituted primarily at the preconceptual level of fear, violence, hate, hope, will, loyalty, commitment, charisma and faith rather than at the level of consciously derived theoretical conclusions. Thus, whenever intellectuals have in fact managed to gain political power — as in the case of the Bolsheviks — they have done so *in spite* of the fact that they were intellectuals. Only by an outrageous stretch of the imagination is it possible to regard the political leadership in any major country today as composed of intellectuals — unless one tautologically defines the two roles as identical. And thirdly, unless one fudges the definition of intellectuals in terms of purely formal and statistical educational criteria, it is fairly clear that what modern society produces is an army of alienated, privatized, and uncultured experts who are knowledgeable only within very narrowly defined areas. This technical intelligentsia, rather than intellectuals in the traditional sense of thinkers concerned with the totality, is growing by leaps and bounds to run the increasingly complex bureaucratic and industrial apparatus. Its rationality, however, is only *instrumental* in character, and thus suitable mainly to perform partial tasks rather than tackling *substantial* questions of social organization and political direction. Far from being radical intellectuals, these people are only ordinary functionaries unable and uninterested in carrying out the roles assigned to them by the "new class theorists."

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In any society, intellectuals have been entrusted with the task of transmitting and renovating culture. Only at exceptional historical junctures, when society has been split into sharply defined classes and engaged in fundamental socio-economic transformation, has the dual function of transmission and renovation been separated; whenever this occurred, the result has always been two opposing groups of intellectuals: conservative and revolutionary or, to use Gramsci's designations, traditional and organic. In the context of a post-New Deal compromise where social classes collaborate to generate a universally acceptable redistribution of the social product, there is no remaining role for organic intellectuals as distinct from that of traditional ones. In fact, effective concern with the totality becomes the exclusive prerogative of a restricted number of high government administrators hamstrung by the pressing need to appease a plethora of conflicting interest groups organized along corporatist lines. All other remaining intellectuals are safely packed away within the academic mothballs of colleges and universities, thereby permanently removed from socio-political realities of a well-manipulated public sphere; or else they are held in reserve as consultants or cheap researchers for both the bureaucratic and the industrial apparatus. Exiled into academic irrelevance though periodically lured by the rewards provided in becoming part of the research arm of the industrial and bureaucratic apparatuses, most intellectuals increasingly disintegrate into narrow professionals and experts prostituting their skills to whatever funding agency happens to engage their services.

The new phenomenon of academic Marxism fits well into this model of social trivialization. Unrelated to any tangible political realities, Marxism can be readily accommodated as one field of specialization among many, within a meaningless educational framework where anything goes and the ignorance of the generations processed through it matches the irrelevance of most of what is being taught. Paradoxically enough, today the most conservative and regressive views thrive within the folds of previously radical and threatening doctrines. Orthodox Marxism, now officially accepted, remains as one of the only serious abodes for a Victorian *Weltanschauung* derided everywhere else. As a field of specialization, academic Marxism can further academic careers, but at the cost of forfeiting whatever emancipatory dimension it may have once had (which does not mean that non-academic Marxism — virtually non-existent — would be any better!).

To be a radical intellectual in such a predicament means, first and foremost, to successfully escape the process of academic trivialization and bureaucratic instrumentalization on the basis of a secularized faith defying ordinary rational justification. But this is not a major problem since predominant rationality has long since become instrumental in character and largely caught up in the nexus of exchange. Thus, it rules out meanings and goals other than those built into the logic of the given. Radical intellectuals in the 1980s are confronted with the paradoxical predicament of articulating transcendental values and performing intellectual tasks traditionally relegated to religious institutions, while earning a living transmitting precisely that culture they seek to change. To be a radical intellectual today is a choice that not only offers no tangible reward in terms of immediate results, but also casts those who have made that choice into a peculiarly conservative mold. For, in the face of the increasing parcellization of knowledge and the rationalization of every feature of existence, the most radical task for intellectuals becomes the salvaging of precisely those traditions and customs previously deemed obstacles to progress. It is only in terms of alternative perspectives so salvaged that the collective irrationality of the

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present can be gauged independently of its internal and redundant modes of evaluation.

In the age of computerized cretinization it becomes the task of radical intellectuals to preserve and renovate precisely those roots, the awareness of which originally distinguished radical from mundane intellectuals. The destruction of nature — and of humanity with it — as well as the nuclear holocaust representing the culmination of the dialectic of the enlightenment cannot be reversed through further rationalization of the irrational. Thus, the reconstitution of traditional islands from which to rethink the project of human emancipation remains an urgent condition for any future movement seeking to avoid duplicating the failures of the past. Organized in small but well-functioning networks, radical intellectuals in the 1980s will have to salvage and advance those traditions and cultures which promise the possibility of effectively opposing irrationality camouflaged as rationalization.

*Joel Kovel:* The intellectual as such has but one capacity — to enhance consciousness, and so to play a role in changing reality. The role is inherently contradictory. On the one hand, we are utterly dependent upon society, but on the other, we are necessarily marginal, inasmuch as consciousness only occurs at the boundary. Our dependence plunges deeper than the institutional troughs where we line up to feed. At heart it is a matter of being the beneficiaries of a relatively freed time granted us by the unfree labor of others. The choice — or should I say obligation? — exists therefore to use our powers to liberate the labor that makes us possible. Meanwhile, we are forever tempted to retreat from the outer edges of marginality where this choice may be exercised, back to the safety of lackeydom.

The dilemma is perennial, but its configuration always changes. As Marx put it, we make history, but not as we please. More precisely, we are subject to conditions at both the long- and the short-range. The former are defined by the general tendency of capital to penetrate subjectivity, particularly through the consciousness industries. It is unnecessary to add that this condition grows more excruciating all the time. As a result, many people have opted for a decent silence as the only radical possibility. The short-term conditions have to do with the recent political fortunes of the Left. I need not repeat here the familiar litany of futility and fragmentation, the loss of theoretical confidence and the shabbiness of many of our setbacks. We have become like troops cut off from the main body of an army who no longer know whether that army exists. Meanwhile, we stumble about in enemy territory, our politics reduced to battles over tenure or other rear-guard actions.

These are, however, no more than the conditions under which we must act. They are our legacy, not our totality; as Sartre would have it, they constitute the practico-inert that is there to be transcended by what we do. Moreover, these conditions have been imposed by the Right, and reflect its interests; consequently, they do not simply represent the way things are, but the way *they* want us to see and accept them. To rest with these conditions is only a species of lackeydom. Therefore, when we extract from our retreat and disarray the theories of our defeat, we should bear in mind that these can be *defeatist* as well as *resistive*. We can rationalize our passivity and lack of courage, even our secret complicity with domination; or we can explore where the order is breaking down and grasp ways in which radical action can make a difference. The point for now and the foreseeable future is neither to make a revolution nor to conjure up a revolutionary class in the wings where none now exists. We have been handed a more modest possibility instead, but a no less honorable one

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given the circumstances — to survive and nourish such roots of life as still exist, and so to prepare the way with a prefigurative politics of liberation. But to do this we have to first of all conquer our own insularity and passivity.

What are defeatist theories of defeat? For a start, anything that dwells upon nostalgia for the 1960s. We tend to flatter ourselves with the 1960s, not because we were better then, but because the decade signaled an unfettering of the subjective side. This had more to do, however, with the contradictions of advanced capital than with our own insights, which too often lacked coherent mediation. In any case, the authentic kernel of New Left politics is debased when we sink into a self-indulgent Chekovian drama and mope about for the sweetness of life back in 1968.

The theoretical reflection of our despair surfaces perversely as admiration for the penetrative powers of capital. Despite their miserable partiality, these powers get inflated into precisely the universality that the masters imagine for themselves. Through our defeatism we conjure up a fantasy of totalization in which both the long- and short-term conditions against which we are supposed to struggle become instead hypostatized into an invisible cage. It has always been the case that the less real power intellectuals have had, the more they have consoled themselves with grandiose schemes serving the combined functions of restoring self-importance and explaining away inertia. Our contribution to this dubious tradition has been the ransacking of critical theory for proof that nothing can be done. Forgotten is the negativity of the dialectic and the ultimate indeterminacy of history, as well as the fact that history is only settled in the present moment. We forget, too, that it is the System itself that strives — hopelessly — for totalization. Theory has the obligation *not* to help it along. Theory is no passive contemplation of history from the outside. It is constitutive of history, part of the making. And its totalization only serves domination.

Far be it from me to advocate Positive Thinking. I am urging instead that we break through our narcissistic isolation and get in touch with what has been transpiring. It turns out that quite a bit has been taking place while we have been wringing our hands. In the disorder of actual affairs, setbacks in some spheres coexist with progressive developments in others. Hope grows alongside despair. Inchoate and reeling as the Left may be from one angle, it is also more vigorous and spontaneous (albeit no less factionalized) than it has been for a long time. Reaganism is only the pretext for the revival. The same fundamental contradictions that have inflicted Reagan upon us are also the real ground for the renewal of the Left. Capital is more dangerous than ever: a wounded beast always is. But its weaknesses have also stripped away liberal mystifications, leaving clearer possibilities exposed. Now a set of crises stemming from technology and the domination of nature fairly scream out for engagement. There is, for example, the ecological crisis, which forces us to rethink the very nature of economics in the interests of survival. There is the technologization of the economy, especially the issue of who will manage the so-called flow of information. This is capital's only chance to reverse its decline. It must be checked. And perhaps most critical of all, there is militarization and the nuclear question, the struggle against which promises to become the great political upheaval of the 1980s, comparable in scope to the anti-Vietnam War movement, but much more fundamental. The church has already stepped in, while intellectuals remain lax and timid. Why? Are we afraid of a politics that demands faith?

These only represent my priorities. To them must be added rapidly developing conflicts about the economy, the various anti-imperialist movements in Africa and Central America, the endless struggle against racism, and the acute crisis of the

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family, reproductive rights and feminism. That anyone, in the face of all this, can wonder whether there is anything progressive to be done is simply astounding.

What can we do as intellectuals? One need not be embarrassed to say, the usual: lend our labor and skills to elucidate the issue of our choice; attack the complicity of those colleagues who servilely reproduce the existing order; most challenging of all, struggle to go beyond toward the vision of an alternative. And again as usual, take risks, the kind that always accrue when one speaks truth to power, a need greater than ever in an era of diminishing liberties, increasing state repression and the ever-tightening noose of the culture industry. Whenever domination takes a mental form, there will be work for us. Once the choice was simpler: socialism or barbarism. Now it is murkier: something unclear vs. barbarism and-or extermination. So be it.

*Russell Berman:* The missiles may be coming, the ozone going and legitimacy shot to hell, but no matter what crises the Wall Street Cassandras imagine, there's a bull market on critical thought. As Stanley Aronowitz put it, "The recent outpouring of social theory, social criticism and historical writing from a Marxist perspective is a development unparalleled in the history of the United States." Marxist scholarship, so it is claimed, grows bigger and better. Its heroism seems to glow all the more against the ominous political background — the final collapse of the New Left and the eruption of the New Right. Social critics in the academy are holding up a candle in dark times: they keep the faith, the "new secular theology." Even where Marxism gives up its orthodox pretenses and humbly swallows its "logocentricity," critical thought is still portrayed as the locus of the emancipatory vision. To cite Aronowitz again: "Socialism is, now as before, a utopian vision rather than a scientifically deduced certainty.... The new utopianism is, metaphorically at least, the concrete negation of scientific Marxism insofar as it tries to *preserve* the Marxist moment within a new paradigm of social transformation." The dream is still good, and the critics can still proclaim it — so the story goes.

Aronowitz is correct at least in his insistence on the unprecedented extent of Marxist research in American university life, which he, however, attributes all too directly to the social tensions of the 1960s and the history of the New Left. With its frantic emphasis on practice, the political movement was hardly less anti-intellectual and anti-academic than most other sectors of American society. The movement may have raised radical questions, but it never tolerated serious and considered attempts to answer them. They could be investigated as part of intellectual life only with the defeat of the movement. Given the character of American culture, a flourishing of critical scholarship is a direct function of the poverty of political life.

This Marxist thought which was never comfortable in a movement always looking for action: what kind of home has it now found in the ivory tower? It is an abused Cinderella, hopelessly at the mercy of a heartless and all-powerful conservative hegemony? Or a shining Gallahad, galloping with lowered lance toward the bellowing beast of bourgeois science? Neither image works. The house that Marxism has entered is not at all in order. If it could flourish only when the political movement ceased to stifle it, it could not begin to spread out its wares until established intellectual life was ready to buy. The collapse of the disciplinary models that had prevailed since the mid-1940s (and earlier) left a vacuum in which various types of non-traditional scholarship could unfold. In fact, Aronowitz's "outpouring of social theory...from a Marxist perspective" must be treated as only one among several versions of non-traditional intellectual work, including the outpouring of feminist research, the

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outpouring of semiotics, the outpouring of ethnic studies. The established paradigms in many areas have entered profound crisis, and Marxism has been relatively successful (less so than the feminists, more than the ethnics) in taking advantage of the situation.

Yet where Marxists, feminists, ethnics, post-structuralists and all other idiosyncratic non-conformists have gained footholds in university life, they have never achieved a hegemonic status within the disciplines. The former outsiders *of* the field are now outsiders *in* the field and have settled into their comfortable ghettoes of special sessions and eccentric journals, always eager to imitate the organs of the established academic discourse from which only their tendentiousness separates them. The anti-traditionalists have both the acumen and the necessary chip on the shoulder to recognize the tokenism of the situation and are only hampered by their individual desire to misperceive it as opportunity (the American dream, from rags to riches, from demonstrations to the dean's office). From the standpoint of the disciplines, however, the introduction of these odd and colorful figures has the effect of arsenic, taken in appropriate moderation: it gives the body tenor and assures its health. American academic life, intellectually decimated by the 1950s and hopelessly overtaxed by the 1960s — to which its traditionalism could offer no substantial response — was compelled to integrate its opponents in order to survive: a homeopathic treatment. Since it could no longer generate any significant discussions on its own, the negativity of its antagonists was artificially introduced in order to stabilize the institution. Even a cursory look at the lists of topics and sessions at major professional meetings shows to what extent the non-traditionalists with their surfeit of exotic persuasions provide the substance of debate. At best they raise new questions in the old academic setting, and at the very least they finally give the established academic world a new conversation topic: themselves.

If critical thought enters the academy as artificial negativity, it does not end up with the free space promised in some presentations of Piccone's notorious thesis. On the contrary, once having entered the collapsing institution in order to shore it up, the outsider accepts the established forms of activity — not, of course, the forms of legitimate academic-intellectual integrity (Nietzsche's *Redlichkeit*), but the predominant forms of commodity production. The rosy outpouring is a bull's market in the commercialization of critical thought, and this commercialization leaves its mark indelibly on the quality of production.

In addition to the three factors already described — the emancipation of critical scholarship from a political movement, the need of the academic world to integrate its antagonist, and the commodification of intellectual production — a fourth and final factor must be mentioned: Marxism's wish for integration. The Left's constructing its own history of suffering, by which it attempts to appropriate for itself the role of martyr (a secularized element of popular religion), also engenders a profound conformist impulse; hoping to escape its persecutor, Marxism imitates it. The recuperation of critical thought is not only the result of objective conditions; it also appears as subjective desire. The mimesis of the establishment takes two forms. One is the direct attraction to the forms and contents of traditional academic power (the parvenu syndrome); the other is the reproduction of these forms, but now filled with new contents, i.e., the development of a Marxist academic establishment, a radical old-boy network (the thinking man's Leninism?). No matter how rudimentary today, such a network may well develop during the 1980s as the social mechanism necessary to manage the outpouring. For every age, its art; for every industry, its experts.

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*Russell Jacoby:* The news that the universities are declining could lull an insomniac to sleep. Yet its impact is still uncharted; the promise and solidarity of left intellectual life dissipate into the promotion and self-promotion of careers. Without a radical student movement as a goad, academics revert to exchanging recipes and remodeling tips. In the long march through the institutions, the institutions won.

The fate of *Telos* accurately registers the fate of critical thought in the universities; it migrated from a department of philosophy to a department of sociology to the friendlier quarters of a US post office box. The persistent difficulty of enlisting new and younger contributors suggests that the universities have upped the ante; in a profession never famous for its gamblers, contributors know they chance disapproving clucks from departmental superiors. The most arcane journal with an academic imprimatur looks better on a resumé than *Telos*, edited by an Italian-American with no regular address or academic clout.

Even in decline, the vastness of the academic system prohibits a single judgment. Nor do I want to pose as a neutral observer. I write today as an increasingly marginal academic but, I hope, not a marginal intellectual. Without lapsing into self-justification, it seems to me that the relation between academics and intellectuals is vital. To broach this also partially illuminates it; academics and intellectuals are not identical. Their relation can be established, loosened or lost.

Intellectuals can be defined in too many ways. If a radical, almost ethical dimension, is preserved in a definition, the distance from academics can be glimpsed. The imperatives of academic life and success dictate scholarly efforts which threaten no one but unaccredited outsiders. Due to the size of the academic enterprise, books can be written, published and priced which are only designed to be shelved in university libraries or purchased by a smattering of professionals. They are not only unreadable, they are entirely insular, referring only to themselves and colleagues.

Today academic fiefdoms are staked out which have a life of their own but no life. Nor do numerous works on Marxism or feminism or anarchism necessarily escape this fate; a positivist delusion confuses a study with its subject matter. Books on Marxism can be as dessicated as studies of verb conjugations of medieval French. Claustrophobia and boredom beset academic life. Academics pace the halls, peering out the sealed windows.

Bankers guard the escape routes. Universities not only monopolize intellectual life, they bankrupt independent producers. In an economy of $3 trillion, the means of support for non-academic intellectuals relentlessly shrinks. Circles of intellectuals which existed or subsisted outside the university, especially in New York, belong to the past. Today even painters, dancers and novelists are usually affiliated with academic institutions.

Until recently, intellectuals were occasionally and irregularly academics, but rarely did they enjoy an unbroken career from graduate student to tenure and retirement. Even those leftists reputed to be the most academic often spent decades outside the university. For instance, Herbert Marcuse only joined the academic system in the 1950s when he was in his 50s. The stakes are high. The absorption of all intellectual life by the universities threatens to sap thought of vigor and backbone. To simply couple title and name suggests the price: Professor Franz Kafka, Professor Antonio Gramsci, Professor Jean-Paul Sartre. The titles gag by indicating a fraud: rotting matter replaces living thought.

A blind anti-academicism feeds and is fed by anti-intellectualism; there is no excuse for promoting either. Without malice or defensiveness, however, the dire

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consequences of the academization of cultural life should be charted. As the world speeds toward renewed class antagonisms, decay and perhaps catastrophe, academics may be busily browsing through the department stores of knowledge, eyeing the goods and each other. No manual instructs how to avoid this fate. It requires, at least, a re-engagement with an intellectual life which is not supine before colleagues and codes. Once again the watchword must be: to resist or *nicht mitmachen.*

*Mark Poster:* The task for intellectuals in the 1980s is to learn the lesson of the 1960s and 1970s. That lesson is a difficult one because it undermines what little certainty there is for critical theory. The certainty is summed up in the proposition that critical theory is grounded in Marx's texts, that however insufficient some versions of Marxism may be, if one searches the texts for their theoretical roots, one will find a valid basis for radical praxis. At worst, detours may be necessary, detours through Hegel or Husserl or Freud. Nevertheless, at the terminus there will be a form of Marxism in which the intellectual can find safety and rest. But that is the rub. The lesson of the past decades belies that conclusion. The irony of it all is that just as American intellectuals established a new Marxist tradition in history, political theory, sociology, literature and elsewhere, the fundamental premises of that tradition were becoming obsolete.

Marxism may now be judged a conservative doctrine on three counts: (1) in places where it is officially established it has produced not socialism but contestation against the government by the very class Marxism intends to represent (2) in the centers of capitalism protests focus on groups and issues that Marxism cannot account for (racial minorities, women, homosexuals, ecologists, anti-nuclear forces); and (3) transformations within capitalism itself have produced modes of domination that are not adequately criticized by or accounted for within the doctrine of labor.

The first two arguments do not require much elaboration. The events in Czechoslovakia in the late 1960s and Poland in the early 1980s display boldly enough the inability of allegedly socialist governments to steer a course toward socialism. In Western Europe the collapse of Eurocommunism in the late 1970s demonstrated the inability of these parties to provide a viable alternative to their Eastern counterparts. Even in the Third World there were disappointments: China forsook Mao for Western technology; African experiments in socialism stalled or foundered badly. The scorecard of world revolution presented a poor showing indeed.

In the capitalist countries a diverse grouping of movements gained the initiative, none of which could be easily explained by Marxist categories. Anti-psychiatry, prison revolt, feminism, gay liberation, environmentalism, regionalism, anti-racism — the list goes on and on of protest movements that seemed vaguely radical but not really understandable as part of the "class struggle." Of course, one can discard these phenomena and consider them merely petty bourgeois, a nice way of keeping one's mind clear for the true struggle. Or one can expand the limits of Marxism to fit the anomalous phenomena and arrive at new syntheses. It seems, however, that Marxism relinquishes its position reluctantly so that feminists or minorities, to cite two examples, quickly become secondary contradictions and their struggle somehow is subordinated to the necessities of the class struggle. By contrast with the new forms of protest, the struggle of the working class in its day-to-day developments takes on a retrograde character. While a truly democratic society certainly requires some form of worker self-management, it does not seem that the perspective that emerges from labor struggles can capture the radicality of advanced industrial society.

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The third argument against Marxism is the most crucial and its elaboration is what I view as the chief task of intellectuals in the 1980s. The configuration of advanced industrial society is significantly different from that of classical capitalism in the mid-19th century. One can see this change especially in labor activity. For the vast majority of the work force, labor is no longer an activity in which men and women work with machines on natural materials or on nature itself. Labor is increasingly of a service type (people working on or for other people) or, and this is the dramatic change, it is mediated by information systems.

The question that needs to be asked in the 1980s is this: what are the forms of domination peculiar to social relations mediated by information systems? For it appears that the logic of domination revealed by Marx was rooted in a system of labor, of men and women acting on nature and this system no longer characterizes our societies. On the contrary, contemporary bureaucratic forms of organization rely upon information at every turn. This information is not casual or intuitive, as might be the case for the capitalist or policeman in the 19th century. Rather, information itself is organized quite systematically into what might be termed discourses. These discourses, in turn, actively shape and create social praxis. Because of the centrality of discourses to contemporary practice, the priority of traditional historical materialism must be overturned. The prejudice that relegates "ideas" to the superstructure must be rejected and a reconstituted historical materialism will have to account for the "materiality" of discourse. Similarly, the role of the human sciences must be called into question. The connection that ties the human sciences to bureaucratic discourse (for example, criminology and prison systems or sociology and welfare agencies) undermines the privileged authority of the scientific subject and ultimately reason itself. For it now appears that the dialectic of the enlightenment has turned full circle: reason in the service of the domination of nature and the benefit of man has become reason in the service of the domination of man.

The problematic of information systems raises the question of language in its historicity. The time has come for the analysis of language to become part of critical theory. The forms of language that exist today are in many cases new historical formations that contain new systems of domination. The discourses of the TV and the computer imply new structures of language, new positionings of speaker and audience that must be critically analyzed. The issue is not the discovery of a utopian moment in language, such as the ideal speaking situation, but the rigorous analysis of the forms of language that are prevalent in the space of daily life. On this basis one can assess the role played by the new language systems in enacting and maintaining systems of domination that ensure the continuity of advanced industrial society.

*Stuart Ewen:* The couple of comments that follow are fragmentary. They're made only in passing, but they point to some thoughts I've had recently about the role of intellectuals at this particular time in history. At the forefront of these thoughts is the notion that radical intellectuals must really respond to recent political and cultural developments. By respond I mean more than analyze. Ideas are a battleground on which we are currently losing a campaign in the U.S., and we must engage and struggle with the ideological panorama that currently swamps and perverts popular visions of what we have and don't need; what we need and don't have. At the heart of the matter, I feel, is the need for us to discover and develop a new political-intellectual language: what I would call a critical vernacular. As long as our ideas were integral to a social movement, we were able to defend their obscurity and

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impenetrability in the name of carrying the critical spirit forward. Our impenetrable ideas were, it was sometimes argued, the precursors of a new way of thinking and living to be carried forward and made more general by social struggles.

Today the commitment to obscurity is merely that, a commitment to obscurity. So-called critical language is a cipher, disassociated from the terms of politics and the terms of existence in an increasingly repressive society. The role of the intellectual in the 1980s must be one of engagement. We must listen and look around; discover the world in which we live, the languages that people understand. From this engagement we must work toward turning the world upside down. We need to learn how to present ideas in a way that is designed to reach people, which means reaching out beyond the graveyard of technical, academic discourse. Such concerns have been bursting inside of me more and more. We must re-examine the pamphleteering traditions, the underground presses, the vernacular not as a degraded language of Coca-Cola commercials, but the vernacular as a critical bond between people in a world that increasingly tears us apart.

In the 15th century, with the birth of printing and the ability to reproduce the word *en masse*, the vernacular was a tool of revolution, breaking apart a world that had based its power in official languages known only to a priesthood, and the rarity of literacy and texts to be read. The vernacular was, in printed form, a channel of revolt. Official ciphers and impenetrable codes were channels of autocratic power. Consumer capitalism has turned this on its head. Today the reproduced vernacular (print, TV, etc.) is the language of capital; impenetrable ciphers are used in the name of popular revolt. Our task for the future, if there is to be one, is to reinvigorate the vernacular as a critical voice. This does not mean translating "things go better with Coke" to "things go better with Marxism." A critical vernacular must not only change the words, it must change the music. It will not be enough to alter the consumable messages from ones selling corporate goods to ones selling revolutionary goods. The very social relations of literacy — written and visual — must be altered within our acts. Esoteric voices must embrace new forms of speaking, of distribution, of interaction. Our alternative media must go beyond alternative messages and move toward creating forums that encourage responses in kind. The critical language, the critical vernacular, must be dynamic. We must reach out with the suggestion of a better world, and rely on increased political consciousness to inform and further define the terms of what to say, what to do.

*Tim Luke:* In the final analysis, the real function of contemporary intellectuals can be discerned most clearly in the machine language of the cybernetic means of production that increasingly define American intellectual labor. The role of intellectuals today is largely that of word processor, image manager, value programmer, symbol analyst. Yet, given this functional integration into the information revolution, the major task of *critical* intellectuals today must be the radical deconstruction of this structural trend towards total administration that continues with the aid and comfort of the professional-technical intelligentsia.

Ideology, it has been said, is the opiate of the intellectuals. Yet, the remarkable resurgence of the New Right in the 1980s demands that even the most hard-core junkies among the contemporary intelligentsia immediately admit themselves into the rough detoxification program of ruthless self-criticism. For far too long, innumerable intellectuals have been mainlining megadoses of a potent ideological skag, namely, the New Class thesis, whose smooth high has befogged entirely the real role and function

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of intellectuals under the administrative regime of corporate capitalism.

During the 1970s, for example, Gouldner pushed a particularly powerful line of this stuff on the streets of many academic ghettoes. Reaching into his boot, Gouldner pulled out what he called "the best card that history has presently given us to play." By this he meant the *intellectuals*, or "a new class composed of intellectuals and technical intelligentsia" that allegedly could contest seriously the "groups already in control of society's economy." As creators and controllers of an apparently universal "speech community" whose boundaries are defined by an intersubjective, reflexive "culture of critical discourse," Gouldner's New Class allegedly contests the old moneyed, properties and privileged classes through its accumulation and circulation of "cultural capital." The gathering forces of intellectuals as cultured capitalists, he concluded in *The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class,* "are grounded in their *individual* control of special cultures, languages, techniques, and of the skills, resulting from these." Because any further rationalization of advanced capitalism seems to require increasing submission to the intellectual and technical skills of the New Class, Gouldner claims that the intellectuals now have an unparallelled opportunity to revolutionize society through their collective command over cultural capital.

More recent events, however, have trumped Gouldner's historical card and are exposing the brittleness of the New Class scam to even the most wasted intellectual addicts. Thousands of scientists, technicians and bureaucrats are given pink slips by government agencies as the rollback of regulatory requirements and welfare deliveries sends their cultural capital crashing through the floor. More thousands of intellectuals, in full individual control of their special skills, techniques and cultures, are pounding the academic pavements as "gypsy scholars" seeking seasonal employment as migrant mental laborers. Even the air traffic controllers, the celebrated indispensable elite of the technical intelligentsia, have witnessed their technical fortunes collapse in the cultural capital markets with the stroke of the president's pen.

Of course, the intellectual members of the New Class, like all men, make their own history not as they please nor under circumstances chosen by them. And, as they seem to be at the threshold of revolutionizing themselves anew, they too conjure up spirits of the past to borrow their names, battle cries and costumes. Consequently, it perhaps is not surprising that Gouldner and other intellectuals have sought the austere traditions of the militant European *bourgeoisie* or the militant Russian *intelligenty* to serve as the self-deceptions needed to conceal from themselves the corporate capitalist limitations placed on their struggles to accumulate new forms of capital (like the bourgeois Jacobin entrepreneur) or to wield these new forms as an avant garde force to revolutionize society (like the militant Bolshevik *intelligent*). Still, in the end, the smooth rush induced by this intellectual smack has only sustained a false enthusiasm among contemporary intellectuals on the high plane of historical tragedy.

The approach to intellectuals by the supply-side cadres of the New Right now positioned at the chokepoints of America's political economy illustrates the real value of mere cultural capital. As the current decimation, for example, of the National Science Foundation, the National Institute of Health and the National Endowment for the Humanities also has shown, the intellectuals and technical intelligentsia are powerless unless their work is strictly policy-relevant, corporate connected, or profit-oriented.

Nonetheless, these ideological opiates do begin to clarify some of the intellectual's

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functions in the 1980s. The scientific intensification of production, which has attended the development of advanced corporate capitalism and the consumer society, has in many respects transformed the importance of words, symbols, skills and images. Information is so precious that it is banked; knowledge has become a business; and culture is regarded as a capital asset. Yet, the motive forces behind these transformations are not generated by the intellectuals' "culture of critical discourse" as much as they are byproducts of corporate capital's *technologies for purposive-rational discourse:* technologies objectified in the newly emergent informatic global networks of electronic devices communicating with each other, robotic machines constructing each other and cybernetic systems designing, programming and monitoring each other. To presume that the intellectuals and technical intelligentsia are the captains of industry in complete command of these new means of production remains a narcotic delusion of incredible proportions.

The intellectuals neither own nor control the physical capital or the cultural capital that anchors the corporate system. At best, the function of intellectuals in the 1980s is that of the hired help. Intellectuals are the tellers at the information banks, the maintenance men at the great universities, the operators for the computer centers, the cameramen in the communications industry, the lifeguards at the data pools, and the counter clerks in the knowledge business. True executive command, however, rests with the corporate managerial strata or the state. And, quite benignly, the corporate managers and state administrators basically permit the subaltern cultural strata, or the intellectuals, their "secret" addictions to these synthetic symbolic substitutes for power in exchange for continuing their manufacture of those images and symbols that legitimize the real wielders of power.

Indeed, the function of intellectuals in the 1980s is largely the same as that shared by all other strata: to produce through consumption. The special image of an intersubjective, reflexive speech community of intellectuals as a nascent universal class, on a more important level, merely mystifies the pre-programmed, stylized "consumption community" assigned to the intellectuals in the growing world market. The role and needs of intellectuals have been scientifically stylized and specifically sliced up to link into distinctive bundles of materials, objects, and professional services that mediate the particular productive position of intellectuals as consumers. Just as the workers will control themselves voluntarily to gain access to Sears, the *Reader's Digest,* Levittown, Pontiacs and Disneyworld, so too can one witness intellectuals accepting their integration into the corporate system in pursuit of those objects and services that corporate product demography has assigned to them to dynamicize production: L.L. Bean, the *New Yorker,* hi-tech Village lofts, Volvos, and summers on Nantucket. Moreover, the intellectuals are doubly integrated inasmuch as they not only consume individually the objects assigned to them by the corporate sphere, but they also as a strata develop, manage, and program the symbols and signals that convert material objects and human services into the pre-packaged needs and prescripted roles of all social strata.

Thus, the function of the individual intellectual in America is to consume those goods and services that intellectuals have coded as constitutive of the "speech community" that they, as a stratum within corporate capitalist society, also produce as their unique "consumption community." And, as a stratum, the real role of intellectuals emerges in their forms of labor as symbol encoders-decoders-recorders. In the machine language of the symbolic system they work within, the intellectuals' roles are most clear: word processors, literature scientists, symbol analysts, image

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managers, signal designers, cultural developers, tradition retrievers, value programmers and informatic modems.

Arguably, in the larger architecture of consumer society, the intellectuals are a minor model for the master mainframe of corporate capitalism. Intellectuals have been charged with the task of retrieving and receiving the analog data of traditional culture, images, symbols, values and norms, and, then, transmitting and transforming these signs into more useful digital applications in the society of bureaucratically controlled consumption. Fragments of bourgeois, feudal, ancient and non-Western culture are encoded, transmitted and recoded by creative and critical minds to dynamicize corporate production: plots from Shakespeare reprocessed as flashy space opera, African motifs recirculated as the summer rage for fashion boutiques, superficial ritualisms of Anglo-Saxon tribal decision-making reorganized as mediagenic democratic spectacle, bits of Old Masters reconstituted as packaging logos, strains of baroque music rescored as sitcom theme music, aspects of English family mores recycled as normal behavior for Haitian boat people, clips of Soviet Red Army films re-recorded as demonological images of the Free World's foes, parts of Indian peasant garb redefined as avant garde chic for suburban teenagers, clichés in Greek building norms recast as necessary signs of municipal authority, pieces of Nazi insignia redefined as fetishes for the motorcycle lumpen, partial premises of historical materialism reconceptualized as the major integral of a multinational econometric forecasting model, glimmerings of the classical liberal arts retuned as babysitting games for public high schools, minor courses in the Mexican diet repackaged as global fast food, or glimpses of Gothic icons reprojected as high-pressure salesmanship on television drive-in Masses for the handicapped. Without the image management of contemporary intellectuals, advanced corporate life itself would be impossible.

A critical task of intellectuals in the 1980s, then, must be the complete self-criticism of intellectual activity under corporate capitalism. As the engagé leftist, the intellectual remains intransigently opposed to corporate capital's *developmental* program of providing more material objects through increasingly rational productivity to more people. Yet, as leftists and as a major productive force, intellectuals rarely question the *means of development* so much as they challenge its actual ends, that is, the continuing aggravation of inequality, deprivation, and alienation within a material culture capable of providing real equality, satisfaction and community. At best, then, the engagé intellectual advances some program for *socialist reconstruction* against that of *capitalist development*. But this accepts the latter's material *means* as it reorders distributive, structural and moral *ends* to serve the program of progressive social movements rather than the managerial-state strata who currently benefit.

Unfortunately, there are no guarantees that the socialist reconstruction would be anything more than a mere reconstruction re-mediating the ills of advanced technological society along similar lines but through different "revolutionary" channels. Without seriously reconstituting present forms of community, personality and politics along non-bureaucratic, non-administrative and non-hierarchical lines, the engagé intellectual will only reach the same destination as the corporate capitalist system. Each totally differs over the design of the vehicles for change, the rate of progress, the method of steering and the scope of satisfactions; yet, the final destination of total administration is shared.

A major task of radical intellectuals in the 1980s, in turn, must be the critique and transcendence of classical programs for socialist reconstruction. Rather, intellectuals should work to *deconstruct* radically the means of symbolic management and

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administrative programming that prevent people from determining their own forms of everyday life, both under developmental capitalism and reconstructive socialism. In deconstructing the repressive ensembles of administration, consumption and production, intellectuals must guide the empowerment, reacculturation, and reskilling of individuals in their own households and communities through the thousands of local, limited, partial struggles that such a general deconstruction implies.

Perhaps only on the local, immediate level of partial struggles can intellectuals resist the reduction of revolution to spectacle, and of movements to single-issue pressure groups that keep the overall system rational through limited inputs of focused criticism. As image managers, the impulse among intellectuals to recast revolution in marketable packages suitable for satisfying the need of mass audiences to visualize (but not realize) the possibility of historical choice remains strong. Similarly, as symbol producers, many intellectuals find it difficult to resist appearing on the Phil Donahue show to mobilize the masses, smiling for *U.S. News and World Report* to spread the word in color glossies, cracking the college textbook market to raise consciousness or substituting that "ERA Now" bumpersticker on the Saab for real ward-heeling for gender equality. Consequently, thousands of potential supporters then settle for mere passive participation in social transformation; they become faithful customers of the new booming Marxist, feminist, libertarian or environmentalist culture industry.

Plainly, radical deconstruction can proceed only if intellectuals refuse to aid and abet the recoding of their political acts as entertaining spectacle and the reprocessing of their critical thinking as system-affirming positive feedback. Regrettably, however, the master mainframes of corporate capital have proven all too effective at continually reassigning this role to intellectuals. The radical student movement was manufactured and manipulated in order to pressure the state out of a pointless, destructive war; liberal feminism has been processed and programmed both to assist the restructuring of the domestic labor markets and to encourage a mixture of households that can simultaneously mobilize cheap, tractable labor and create new needs for goods and services no longer provided by women; and, now, the ecological movement is being designed and developed to legitimate a new exurban, downsized and "voluntarily" simplified consumerism as the corporate capitalist state recognizes that it *cannot* rebuild the cities, retain mass social services and reinflate complex consumer expectations as it has prior to 1973.

The continuing symbolic integration of all social strata will persist until the critical intellectual refuses to transmit and transform human praxis into the lexical matrices of mass management that advanced corporate society generates in the public and private sectors. Critical intellectuals, instead, must revitalize the *vernacular dimension* in politics, language, society and culture at the local-regional level, hoping that their contributions of critically grounded "good sense" can recombine with the popularly oriented "common sense" of particular communities in such a fashion as to deconstruct from within the administrative regime of the contemporary corporate state.

*Robert D'Amico:* I think I share with many others a deep distrust of the role of the radical intellectual, as that has become embodied within Marxism, and as it more generally reflects the enlightenment model. The disillusionment with this model or program is only the other side of a growing series of questions concerning the theoretical matrix of both Marxism and 19th-century social thought as a whole.

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The model of the intellectual as the avant garde of political consciousness runs like a thread from, e.g., Kant's *What Is Enlightenment?* to Gramsci's *The Modern Prince*. The picture is one in which the discontent of the masses is articulated by thinkers who by virtue of articulating this discontent as the voice of reason turn a mass into a social movement. Critical reason expresses humanity's demands and then justifies these demands through reason's regulative ideals. Thus the intellectual leads neither through any traditional skill of "poliscraft" nor organizational effort but solely by being there at the right historical moment.

Why is this model unacceptable? Why should we reject it or even treat it with suspicion?

First, it is the model of a liberal politics and was both defined and justified in opposition to preliberal state power. But liberalism, in both capitalist and socialist forms, has triumphed and is now the universe of political discourse and control. Therefore the role of the intellectual has been institutionalized; it has succeeded. In its success the radical intellectual is either an anachronistic vestige of past political practice or is used as an "artificial negativity" recognizing problems while providing the reaffirmation of the liberal solution.

Second, the model is inherently manipulative and instrumental when radicalized or made to turn against liberalism. Leadership, through illusions of theoretical certainty or with a scientific veneer, leads to a regressive despotism. Also failures are then interpreted as a perversion of theory by the masses but never a challenge to the intellectual's hegemony.

Third, the utopian goals and regulative ideals of the enlightenment program have become ambiguous or even dangerous. Ideals of rationality, autonomy and equality, in their very abstractness, can be and have become tools of coercion, power and increased domination. The optimistic belief that certain ideals are necessarily liberating is a symptom of enlightenment dogma.

Finally, as always, the problem is that the reproduction of social relations, the exercise of power and the function of ideology have been completely restructured in the formation of the modern state. Thus the location of the intellectual, whether in the university or not, makes historical optimism a powerful tool of the state, and at the same time makes theories of discontent further mechanisms of control.

As the age of intellectuals dims we must hasten its eclipse. We must reject not just the roles our tradition hands on to us but the dogmas that sustain these roles as the hidden assumptions of traditional social theory. The fanciful and impossible quest of intellectuals, both bourgeois and anti-bourgeois, to constitute and ground mass movements in social philosophy would be humorous if its rigorous pursuit, in the waning decades of the 20th century, had not proved so apocalyptic.

*Murray Bookchin:* Almost presciently, the query's verbiage answers the question to which we are asked to respond: the majority of us are, in fact, nothing more than "leftist intellectuals" in search of a "Movement" rooted in a "material base." And this is also our rationale for what we are. We have lost the historic sense that the yeast of a revolutionary movement is a revolutionary *intelligentsia*, an ever-fermenting, conscious, idealistic social stratum that is legitimate in its own right and that has the historic function of providing the form and focus for sweeping social change. Intellectuals are linked together by nothing but ideas — and, as I shall argue, by ideas of a special kind. To the extent that they are organized, they are integrated into the academy, by academic journals, by the "marketplace of ideas" in the crassest

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commodity sense of the term, by self-indulgent symposia, and by the ethics of intellectual competition and careerism. A revolutionary intelligentsia *is* a movement in the literal sense of the term, linked by its own intellectual subculture and marked by its own street life of public periodicals, newspapers, pamphlets, and public forums. It exists in radical tension with the professionalization of ideas by the academy, indeed, in an off-campus world where activity is tangible and ideas can be translated into programs. Such revolutionary intelligentsias — one thinks, here, of figures like Chernyshevsky, Bakunin, Kropotkin, Lenin, and Trotsky in Russia, Blanqui, Hugo, Cabet, the brothers Reclus, and the students and journalists who frequented the Cafe Brasserie in Paris, Marx, Engels, Mehring, Luxemburg, and Landauer in Germany — leave one wondering incredulously what it means to speak of "leftist intellectuals" in search of a "Movement" with a "material base."

In all fairness, we should be clear that this revolutionary intelligentsia tasted defeat, imprisonment, and exile as a matter of course — and often suffered a degree of isolation from the "masses" politically more demoralizing than anything we face in America. Yet none of these blows dissolved them as a *social* phenomenon. My point is that our "leftist intellectuals" do not constitute a revolutionary intelligentsia, indeed, not even an interesting bohemia. They have no sense of their existence as a social community. The most obvious feature of our intellectuals as distinguished from an intelligentsia is that in a real sense they are the bureaucrats of theory, just as the Eberts, Stalins, and Guesdes were the bureaucrats of organization. They are separated as an entity not only from a "Movement" but from society. Their theories do not lead to programs that unite intellectuals into an intelligentsia; their theories lead to journals that unite intellectual bureaucrats in ideological institutions. A conclave of academics, their principal goal is a cerebral opportunism that is committed more to the institutionalization of ideas than a fluid theoretics whose fecundity inspires movements and brings life to the latent radical tendencies in society.

And let us be honest about it: it is not for want of any "Movement" that we are boxed into an intellectual cemetery whose "leftists" have become professionalized and their status bureaucratized. Whether potentially in America or explicitly in Europe, the Movement is rich with radical promise. What is interesting is that many so-called leftist intellectuals tend to deflect it, if they can, rather than give it expression and form. One of the heaviest afflictions that burdens German radicalism today are figures like Habermas and the alumni of Starnberg whose schematization of ideas and whose strategy of appropriating the most sterile tendencies in the academy, replacing critique by a specious "sublation," has reduced theoretics itself to a shadow play of the campus and the research institute. The same can be said for the less sophisticated *gauchistes* of France, the Althussers, Ricoeurs, Gorzes, and their admirers in America. That intellectuals have the responsibility of becoming a movement, an intelligentsia, *especially* if one does not fully exist in a wider public realm, is not even an issue to be discussed today. More often than not, their goal has been to elaborate disciplines rather than develop projects, to meld the bloodless tenets of semiology, systems theory, pragmatism and positivism with the archaicisms of historical materialism. The unflagging appetite of these leftist intellectuals to gain credibility within their respective disciplines, to be *au courant* and appreciated as its "left wing" and its most "forward-looking tendency," is appalling evidence that what we lack is not a public movement but a revolutionary intellectual movement — one that historically, at least, has always rescued the very idea of revolution from social reaction.

I do not believe that the absence of a revolutionary intelligentsia today can be

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explained by such commonplace notions as co-optation, one-dimensionality, and disempowerment, important as these notions may be — and have *always* been when mere intellectuals are involved. It is my view that the organic source of this lack is a result of the failure of our leftist intellectuals to go beyond a long-dead Marxian tradition that does not speak to American society and lacks roots in the radical traditions of our culture. Laden with ideas of "material bases" and their "superstructures," it does not take serious cognizance of the disintegration of public life and the destructuring of the class relations that once legitimated Marxian theory. That people in the hundreds of thousands have marched in Europe today around issues behind which Marxists have lagged rather than pioneered is evidence of a hopeless malaise in Marxian theoretics, currently reeling under the blows of "universal pragmatics."

What we have not pieced together is the street life of a revolutionary intelligentsia: theoretical disputes that are meant to guide us to action, the singling out and elaboration of issues that are alive, the elaboration of a theory that organically integrates them rather than merely appends them to a sclerotic tradition, the exploration of changes that have occurred since the death of proletarian socialism, the forms of freedom and a libertarian organizational life — and perhaps more existentially, the journals, pamphlets, open forums, networks (hopefully that go beyond exchanging Ph.D. dissertations), even newspapers and leaflets if I may dare to permit my 1930s experiences in the left to carry me away; in short, activities that will turn *us* into a movement until "The Movement" fully re-emerges.

What I am suggesting is that we have more of a congress than a conference around these problems; that we unite as a social force rather than a collection of seminars; that we think of ourselves as a cultural offensive rather than bemoan the lack of a "movement" which we ourselves are duty-bound by any historical criteria to constitute if one does not exist in a "mass" sense. Indeed, after our lengthy refrigeration in the academy — whose usefulness as a source of paychecks I will not deny — and our need to thaw out from the frigidity of the Starnberg crowd, is it unfair to ask if many of us can even "descend" from lecturing to agitation and argue out in any public sphere available to us the very issues that would make a real movement possible and coherent?

*Eleni Mahaira-Odoni:* The 1960s movement has indeed died and many of us, unless willing to risk precious jobs, seem forced into the traditional role of intellectuals — doing our job, academic or other, like Gramsci's "functionaries of the superstructure." For concerned academics this is a distressing constraint but not an altogether unexpected one. Wasn't intellectual professionalism the essence of a middle-class ideal that propelled us into years of search for universality, in many cases, as an escape from 'reality?'

At the risk of sounding cynical, it can be argued that for many of us in the 1960s, the existence of a Movement vented and neutralized the guilt of intellectual distance by providing a real-world justifcation for our universalist preoccupations. In other words, we have to realize that to be an intellectual is to live with a contradiction: our search for universality (i.e., a practical truth to be equally enjoyed in a better society) is made possible by our present acceptance of a hierarchical society that designates us as a separate class with particular interests. Even at the height of the 1960s movement it would be illusory to believe that this contradiction was overcome. In the best of cases, as in the early stages of the May 1968 events in France, when intellectuals *joined* rather than led student and factory revolts, this contradiction appeared to dissipate but was never resolved. Nevretheless, if we could now consciously reconcile ourselves to

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this condition and the harsh professional realities, this renewed isolationism could prove beneficial for taking stock of what is and what ought to be.

This is to suggest that perhaps the Movement was neither effaced nor co-opted. It is overly optimistic to proceed on the assumption that today's acute economic crisis may be stirring collective memories distilled from the social gains of the 1960s? This implies that, instead of dying, values, ideas and popular expectations forged by the Movement have been merely lying dormant. If this is true, the continuing economic crisis might be instrumental in mobilizing social strata that we previously considered impervious to a felt need for change.

In this context, today's middle class, by far the broadest socio-ideological stratum, provides promising possibilities for measuring our theoretical perspectives against empirical patterns, "moods," and attitudes. A perfunctory look at this country's current mood suggests that conservatism, tax revolts and the response to the repackaging of federalism seems to be producing a backlash effect. Middle-class voters are beginning to feel that, for all their belt-tightening, they can no longer *afford* to be the middle class. As basic middle-class expectations (food, housing, higher education) are increasingly threatened from above, there is little reason to believe that the middle class will be willing to give them up without a fight. While still far from constituting a digested, coherent or broad-based political stance, the present concerns of the 'average man' contain a positive potential, although the rise of reaction can never be entirely discounted. Today, ecology, the quality of life, shared family roles, flexi-time, nuclear and waste control are common household words rapidly growing into universal issues. As the public realizes that the American dream is fast receding into utopia, the economic crisis may prove the only catalyst to mediate individual awareness of privately changing needs.

In the last analysis, tapping and mapping out the realm of the middle class may be our only alternative as intellectuals. To bemoan the eclipse of the Movement is to isolate ourselves into professional specialization, thus buttressing the spirit of seriousness, as Sartre would say; it would be to acquiesce and lend credibility to establishmentarian and state pronouncements that can easily turn into self-fulfilling prophecies. In addition to despair, this attitude reinforces inactivism and shifts the responsibility and possibility of social change to the initiative of state and political structures — by now, a highly questionable prescription. If the seeds of future political change lie within the present social structure, today's intellectuals are faced with a variety of tasks. In general terms, gathering, comprehending and articulating the evolving attitudes of the mainstream should provide us with a more solid foundation for assessing our theoretical expectations. In the long run, this process might even rid some of us of our delusions about a class that we pretend to have left behind.

A particularly good place to start this journey through reality may be with ourselves. Many of us, *because* we are intellectuals or part of a Movement, have learned to dispense with or excuse ourselves from the tedious daily "business of living." If we devote more time to the everyday, hence truly political issues that our lofty pursuits have divorced from our concerns, we might succeed in shortening the gap from the "material base."

*Frank Adler:* How distant we feel today, on both sides of the Atlantic, from the great engagements of the 1960s, when *tout était possible* . . . or so we thought. It seems as if our generation has its own particular cross to bear. Few of us have made a separate peace with the older generation of intellectuals who, after a brief eclipse,

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have washed the slate clean and resurrected the same old shit. Marginality within retrenching university structures and an enduring critical spirit prevent a smooth transition into their universe, one of unearned privilege and undeserved *ennui*. Yet few of us are any longer drawn to collective social action or are energized by youthful dreams of collective transcendence and emancipation. That messianic eschatology which — when we're honest enough to admit it — lay under our holy crusade against the Bourgeois Sodom and the Imperialist Gomorrah fell victim both to folly and intellectual integrity. Demystifying society also entailed deflating our own myths, severing the perches — Marx, Lukacs, Gramsci — that had afforded us momentary support. Maybe there is no radical otherness after all; certainly we are not the negation of the negation. Still, we keep our principled distance, we don't fall into line, we carry on as best we can.

In a sense, we have returned to our starting point; the apparent radical parenthesis has been closed. Within the social sciences, one can detect a glaciation, a growing conformity, a return to old orthodoxies that are no less threadbare now than they were before the frontal attacks of the 1960s were launched. In the wake of protest movements on both sides of the great political divide, one can see a return to the same cynical political machinations observed 20 years ago by Mills and Marcuse: Marxist-Leninism, as a science of legitimation, extends to entire societies the unfreedom of the Gulag; pluralism, systems theory and now corporatism have stripped classical liberal-democratic thought of all critical normative content. In significant and varying degree, the non-participation of each system's presumed subject — collective worker or autonomous citizen — has become a permanent feature of political stabilization, despite the fact that both modes of bureaucratic domination have engendered their own unresolved crisis tendencies. Neither Eurocommunism nor Eurosocialism represent real alternatives, regardless of their various ideological claims, insofar as each has simply recycled some contradictory combination of liberal, corporatist, social-democratic or democratic-centralist models.

That the political situation is dismal at best hardly needs stating. Yet for our generation this is a particularly painful predicament, since the impulse behind 1960s student radicalism was one of promoting change through an alternative politics. This is no longer tenable practically or perhaps even theoretically. Despite our outrage and the honesty of our youthful sentiments, we have come to learn that there is no such beast as a revolutionary intellectual. Politics has its own internal exigencies, which include mystification and ideological deception (sometimes masquerading as self-deception); the intellectual spirit — especially the idealist notion of critique so basic to our formation — calls for ruthless demystification. The effort to occlude this fundamental dichotomy is far older than Marx, Lukacs or Gramsci; it is as old as political philosophy itself. Plato, albeit in *sotto voce,* concedes that politics necessarily entails "royal lies" and "preventive medicines" to legitimate the ideal republic, giving lie to the superficial conventional view that he seriously sought an identity between politics and philosophy. Subsequent identity theory, however grandiose, led if anything to disastrous attempts at practical realization.

Our predicament, however, is not so simple, for one's intellectuality, to some degree, both reflects and is bounded by politics. One doesn't criticize in general, one focuses on determinate targets; the limits of tolerance, likewise, are as much a function of political relations as academic convention. How many of us have learned this the hard way! While we never had a Suslov who could lay down universal rules of orthodoxy governing all political questions, we all have known the little suslovs in the

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various disciplines who set the limits and control access to research grants and teaching posts. In their own way, they are just as vulgar as their Russian peasant counterpart — especially in the social sciences. Here, it is not so manifestly crude as defending the purity of ossified Marxist-Leninist dogma from all "degenerate" revisionism, but rather defending ossified behavioralism, similarly misconceived, from such alternative approaches as critical theory. Moreover, we find a truly amazing situation where the crudest forms of Marxism are tolerated, if not enthusiastically encouraged. Why the newfound tolerance for nuts-and-bolts Marxism? First, because the behaviorist paradigm has been shot full of holes and can no longer claim its previous exclusivity, even among the most unabashed bootlickers. Second, because behaviorism and orthodox Marxism, ideology aside, share the same essential idiom and grounding — positivism. Third, at no real cost, the little suslovs can engage in what Marcuse used to call "permissive tolerance," thus demonstrating their "pluralist" convictions.

Political science is in a particularly dismal state. Who would have believed 10 years ago that the CIA would send openly identified representatives to scholarly meetings, that the *American Political Science Review* would solicit book reviews from CIA analysts, or that the CIA would brazenly recruit experts in counter-revolution in the APSA Personnel Service Newsletter — all this with no apparent sense of provocation! Who would have believed 10 years ago that a Seymour Martin Lipset would be elected president of the American Political Science Association, or that his major work, *Political Man,* for years a model of how *not* to conduct comparative political analysis, would suddenly merit a new critical edition. Theoretical and historical weightlessness is again in fashion, along with substantively insignificant though formally imposing number-crunching. Still more ominous is the appearance of a book like Bernard E. Brown's *Intellectuals and Other Traitors,* which calls for a purge of 1960s radicals form their alleged power base in the univerisites. Graduate students and young recruits have gotten the message; their clean-cut appearance and polyester uniforms match their properly antiseptic *curriculum vitae.* At the last APSA national meeting I failed to recognize an old friend from my graduate school days; this erstwhile *incroyable* had even gone so far as to change his name.

Here we confront a seemingly impossible situation: on the one hand, identity theory and political myths have to be rejected, to the degree that one is true to one's calling as an intellectual; on the other, one cannot be a "successful" intellectual without conforming to the power relations within the academy. Those of us who hang on are defenseless and isolated, cut off even from the younger generation which, through little fault of its own, has been mercilessly cretinized and often acts in textbook compliance with Lasch's thesis on narcissism: without a sense of historical continuity, incapable of self-discipline, unable to make commitments. Perhaps we're back to the Great Refusal. If we cannot believe in an affirmative vision of total political reconstitution, at least we can continue the tradition of critique. Lowenthal was correct in maintaining that the negative is in such a situation positive, "this consciousness of not going along, the refusal." We, too, must not succumb to the Faustian temptation. As teachers, we must do what we can, despite the odds, to overcome social amnesia. Our students must learn that there were moments, even in this misbegotten century, when people — yes, even simple people — reclaimed their subjectivity, reflected on the meaning of life and their place in it, sometimes rising to the occasion at the cost of their own lives. Not only philosophy, but political and social studies must be rescued from the arid scholasticism and ignoble careerism of the apparatchiks. Yes, we're back to the Great Refusal. We stand with those who have

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fallen; not just with our theoretical mentors who carried forth the critical spirit in times far worse than our own, but also with those "simple people" who with consummate dignity fought the same battle. The following fragment illustrates well this point. It is from a letter that a condemned *partigiano* wrote to his children, hours before his execution on April 13, 1944: "Love study and love work. An honest life is the best ornament of he who lives. Of the love for humanity make a religion, and always attend to the needs and sufferings of your fellows. Love liberty and remember that this good must be paid for with continual sacrifices and sometimes even with life. A life in slavery is better not to live. Love your mother country, but remember that your real country is the world, that everywhere you will find your brothers. Be humble and scorn all pride; this was the religion I followed in life. Perhaps, if it be my destiny, I will survive this ordeal. But if not, I die in the certainty that the Spring I so waited for will soon sparkle on you. This wish gives me the strength to face death serenely."

*Richard Wolin:* There is little doubt that one of the salutary achievements of *Telos* since its inception some 14 years ago has been its role in making available to an English-speaking readership (through translations, critical essays, and the periodic organization of conferences) a tradition of 20th-century European *dialectical social theory*; a tradition whose conceptual thrust stands in marked contrast to the overwhelmingly quietistic and scientized variants of theory predominant then and now. Originally the dissemination of these radical theoretical currents — Hegelian Marxism, critical theory, phenomenological Marxism — was conceived of as a natural and organic accompaniment to the political and cultural "enlightenment" of the 1960s. To state merely that the hopes of this period were not borne out would be to oversimplify drastically the well-nigh monolithic regression to an utterly privatized and routinized conception of political awareness that has taken root in recent years. In line with these developments, the question as to the relevance and purport of radical thought in an era in which its immediate relation to practice has fallen into a state of prolonged abeyance must be posed once again.

In the latter pages of Adorno's Hegel-critique in *Negative Dialectics* ("World Spirit and Natural History"), one runs across two sentences — characteristically terse, pregnant, Adornoesque — which go far toward revealing the hidden underside of the by now infamous critical theory thesis concerning the totally administered world of late capitalism. The first reads: "total socialization objectively hatches its opposite, and there is no telling yet whether it will be a disaster or liberation." This admission of ambivalence on Adorno's part concerning a process he had elsewhere described as a "network of total blindness" will undoubtedly be greeted with incomprehension by his inflexible detractors — and, more recently, by his Anglo-American popularizers. It is a claim, however, which only receives its due through the second statement alluded to, which runs as follows: "The universal that compresses the particular until it splinters, like a torture instrument, is working against itself, for its substance is the life of the particular; without the particular the universal declines to an abstract, separate, eradicable form."

These two observations, written just prior to the emergence of the counterculture for which Adorno otherwise had little use, proffer an incredibly prescient interpretation of the dialectic of system integration and social integration in the post-war period: the conflict between the *objective* requirements of system maintenance and the subjective need to form a cohesive *social identity*. For Adorno recognized, in a way that few have before or after, the manner in which the increasingly blind, nature-like development of the state-managed capitalist economy

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becomes fundamentally inimical to the very illusion of autonomous bourgeois subjectivity which the system must continually preserve in order to legitimate itself. Hence, he foresaw the advent of the rampant proliferation of social disequilibrium which briefly threatened the democracies of the West in the mid- to late 1960s; a disruption of normalcy which, insofar as it occurred during a period of economic prosperity, left orthodox Marxism holding the bag, as it were.

Adorno's insight was later reaffirmed and expanded in Habermas' compact but brilliant *Legitimation Crisis*. Habermas — through an immanent critique of the systems theory he correctly perceives as the most advanced representative of bourgeois social science in the contemporary era — recognizes that the capitalist state, by explicitly thematizing social issues that were in the laissez-faire era presumed to be reconciled by the economic sphere itself, lays itself open as never before to crises of legitimation; for now it must also account, before the decimated remnants of the classical bourgeois public sphere, for a vast array of managerial and interventionist activities, the elimination of which was deemed one of the cardinal advances of capitalism's entrepreneurial phase. In a manner reminiscent of Adorno's discussion of the "totally socialized society" that engenders its opposite, Habermas takes note of the contemporary ramifications of the process (first described by Weber) of rationalization or *Weltentzauberung* — resulting in the emergence of a passified, "positivistic common consciousness" (Adorno's spectators of the culture industry). Yet, the upshot of the relentless march of disenchantment is that once the normative basis of the great world religions is eroded, and, concomitantly, the market ideology of equivalent exchange is undermined (by the interventionist state's having visibly rendered the economy non-autonomous), advanced industrial societies run the serious risk of a motivation crisis, i.e., the technocratic ideologies that are offered as a replacement for the now-damaged traditional (religious) and bourgeois-universalistic moral codes prove incapable of providing the resources of meaning necessary for the development and maintenance of an integral social identity among the denizens of system theory's brave new world. As Habermas notes: "The sciences establish a monopoly on the interpretation of outer nature. They devalued inherited global interpretations and transformed the mode of faith into a scientistic attitude that permits faith in the objectivating sciences. In this domain contingencies are recognized and, to a large extent, made bearable.... On the other hand, with growing complexity in the areas of *social* coexistence, a number of new contingencies have been produced, without a proportionate growth in the ability to master contingencies. Hence the need for interpretations that overcome contingency and divest not yet controlled accidents of their accidental character no longer arises in relation to *outer* nature; but it is regenerated in an intensified form by suffering from uncontrolled *societal processes*. Today the social sciences can no longer take the function of world views. Instead, at the same time they dissolve the metaphysical illusions of order last produced by the objectivistic philosophy of history, they contribute to an increase in avoidable [i.e., social] contingencies" (pp. 119-120; emphasis added).

Through this resurrection of the Hegelian Marxist theme of second nature (albeit in systems theoretical garb), Habermas seeks to explain the susceptibility of late capitalism to crises of social identity or motivation. In the modern period the age-old problems of societal self-preservation undergo a peculiar reversal; it is no longer physical but *spiritual sustenance* that falls into short supply; that is, *meaning itself becomes a scarce resource*. In this way Habermas attempts to comprehend retrospectively the crisis of social integration that plagued the 1960s. The widespread

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social anomie (especially noticeable among the socio-psychologically vulnerable late adolescent age group) which resulted has the potential to assume either the constructive form of collective political contestation, or the nihilistic form of narcissistic, a-political withdrawal. It was undoubtedly the latter alternative that triumphed in the ensuing decade.

The latter prospect was one of which Habermas himself, writing at a time when the turbulent mood of the 1960s was already largely a thing of the past, was only too readily aware. Whereas the purported advance of *Legitimation Crisis* over the position of "classical" critical theory lay in its identification of a significant new arena of potential political conflict and confrontation — centering around the twin legitimation-motivation crisis problematic (Part II) — in the book's concluding section, Habermas somewhat surprisingly presents a forceful argument justifying the original Horkheimer-Adorno claim concerning the end of the individual (Part III, pp. 117-130). And he does so by employing analyses that are, ironically, much more theoretically sophisticated than theirs. The concrete implications of his critique are therefore highly ambiguous, insofar as he proceeds rather rapidly to revoke the foregoing more promising diagnosis by conceding the system's ability to uncouple the sphere of system integration from that of social integration. That is, if the prophets of the new degenerate technocratic utopia have their way, the necessity for the modern capitalist world system to justify itself in terms of the universalistic normative claims that were part and parcel of classical bourgeois ideology (claims to generalized freedom, equality, etc.) would be rendered anachronistic. They would be supplanted, though, by the cybernetic imperatives of system maintenance and steering mechanisms — the execution of which, in an era of increasing technological complexity must naturally be entrusted to elites. According to this scenario, one would surmise that the late capitalist culture industry — the agency explicitly charged by Horkheimer and Adorno with culpability for the eclipse of the autonomous bourgeois individual — would necessarily step up its diversionary functions. It would have to work all the harder to provide a semblance of pseudo-normative compensation for the revocation of the now obsolescent substantive core of the traditional bourgeois credo of possessive individualism. Indeed, given the lightning-like manner in which the serious assault on the capitalist system of the 1960s has been effectively recuperated and rechanneled into less politically challenging avenues (such as the various narcissistic orientations of the 1960s), the underlying pessimistic suspicions of Habermas' crisis schema would seem to have been borne out. Hence, as Habermas himself notes at one point: "The new techniques of political demonstration have altered little but the level of expectation. Thus there arises a gray area in which the social system can live with the non- (or not-yet-) opposition it calls forth without having to solve the problems that are the occasion, ground or cause of the protests. Blows directed against stone walls bounce off rubber screens."

The end result of the dialectic of rationalization observed by both Adorno and Habermas is not, for the time being at least, one that is replete with emancipatory possibilities. Insofar as the system continues to deliver the goods while persistently withholding the promise of happiness, theoretical analysis must shift its focus to the qualitative needs that capitalism manipulates and distorts, in the hope of stimulating a more generalized social awareness concerning the true nature of the social system itself.

Fundamentally, however, the *Tendenzwende* or ideological shift in recent American politics following the apparent neutralization of the social unrest of two

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decades earlier signifies an (at least temporary) setback for Habermas' project of an "offensive critical theory" (cf. Honneth, *Telos*, 39); instead, it ushers in a renewed relevance for the original critical theory thesis of one-dimensionality. This thesis itself was never intended, as some have misconstrued it, as a passive theoretical ratification of the iron cage of late capitalist social relations. Rather, in full accord with the Marxian notion of ideology critique, it was meant as a spur to a process of theoretical enlightenment and clarification which would be an indispensable prerequisite for any constructive political engagement. In line with the rejection of the traditional Marxian and social democratic illusions concerning the inevitability of historical progress, this perspective attempts to emphasize the fact that the adversary at hand is one whose strength it would be nearly impossible to *over*-estimate. At the same time, it is a standpoint which is also accompanied by the knowledge that the contradictions of the system have been merely restructured and not resolved; and that therefore the very success of its totalizing mechanisms of integration works against it as well as for it — after the fashion suggested by the two Adorno quotations cited earlier.

The quietistic regression to a state of business as usual among the Western democracies in recent years has jeopardized not only the potential for progressive social change, but has also domesticated or rendered seemingly irrelevant the various radical theoretical currents that were viewed as an essential interpretive complement to New Left politics. These currents represent a last bastion of determinate negation *vis-à-vis* the existing social order. They are themselves the object of attack (or at best the subject of benign neglect) in the university system from all too familiar scientistic or neo-irrationalist quarters. In an age where the thesis of the end of the individual is itself unabashedly acknowledged by the technocratically inclined proponents of bourgeois social science, the preservation of the remaining vestiges of negativity and refusal is not a mission to be valued lightly. But this is precisely the mission that falls to the critical intellectual today. Insofar as the worldviews of scientism and technocratic administration themselves become increasingly *primary and autonomous sources of domination*, the so-called ideological struggle against such tendencies — even if confined to the seemingly inconsequential terrain of the university — itself becomes a more and more important focal point from the perspective of radical thought. For the stakes in this drama have become the very capacity of intellectual life to realize itself in terms other than the most stultifying and standardized patterns. It is in this sense that the original impulses of critical theory — be it in the form of Adorno's dialectic of non-identity or Marcuse's Great Refusal — assume a renewed significance. For it has become increasingly apparent that problems of total administration, which the era of the New Left had hoped to transcend once and for all, remain very much a part of the congealed fabric of contemporary social life. As Marcuse explains in the Preface to the 1960 edition of *Reason and Revolution*: "Dialectical logic is a critical logic: it reveals modes and contents of thought which transcend the codified patterns of use and validation. Dialectical thought does not invent these contents; they have accrued to the notions in the long tradition of thought and action. Dialectical analysis merely assembles and reactivates them; it recovers tabooed meanings and thus appears almost as a return, or rather a conscious liberation of the repressed! Since the established universe of discourse is that of an unfree world, dialectical thought is necessarily destructive, and whatever liberation it may bring is a liberation in thought, in theory. However, the divorce of thought from action, of theory from practice, is itself part of the unfree world. No thought and no theory can undo it; but theory may help prepare the ground for their possible reunion, and the ability of thought to

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develop a logic and language of contradiction is a prerequisite for this task.... All thinking that does not testify to an awareness of the radical falsity of the established forms of life is faulty thinking." Never before has the survival of critical thought been so threatened; and thus never before has the preservation of the critical theory perspective been so imperative.

*Adolph Reed Jr.:* The question of the proper role for (radical) intellectuals in the current decade is conditioned by two historical phenomena that radical intellectuals do not often discuss, though for reasons that are rather different. These are: (1) the collapse in the 1970s of the familiar model of radically oppositional politics and its pacification by integration into the distributive processes of interest group pluralism; and (2) the character of intellectuals as a particular stratum, a discrete center of interestedness in the society. The first phenomena eludes discussion partially because it is unpleasant and appears to augur hopelessness; after all, we all secretly fear being seduced by the "god that failed" syndrome, which our generation of leftists — e.g., Eldridge Cleaver, Rennie Davis, Bernard-Henri Levy, etc. — has transmuted into the god that succeeded. The second escapes attention for all the reasons that prevent ideology from being understood by those under its influence.

Both phenomena are implicated in our ambivalence over pursuit of things like tenure and academic careers generally. The collapse of the movement drove some of us into universities or closed off the option to leave them, and we often harbor a sense that intellectual work is of marginal emancipatory significance as compared to political activism. At the same time, few of us turn down university appointments for other than career reasons; we might safely assume that even fewer have rejected tenure, and of course we all make certain that the checks for our publications are properly written and mailed to the proper address. The point here is not that we should deprecate these aspects of our activity but that leftist intellectuals occupy a peculiar structural position in this society, a position in which the activity that defines our critical stance *vis-à-vis* the social order is simultaneously the activity through which we derive our status and income within that same order. This dialectic of critique and career is grounded materially in the social division of labor and contributes to our ambivalence over our role, and this same dialectic may have been in part responsible for the collapse of the movement in the first place.

Radically oppositional politics in the U.S.lost its basis for several reasons. First, repression was significant. Second, the mainstream of the movement realized the non-transcendent objectives — ending the war and draft, dismantling segregation, dormitory visitation, democratization of tonsorial, sartorial, and pharmacological fashion, etc. — that had allowed 1960s radicalism to develop a popular constituency. Third, individual spokesmen and programs were co-opted. Fourth, the modalities of activism were integrated into the social administrative system. Another source of the movement's dissolution, however, was the circumstance that leftist intellectuals — including Marxists, perhaps even especially — were unable to generate an effective critique of welfare capitalism as a system of social organization.

The reality of the left's political role in the 1960s was more than anything else an ongoing effort to mobilize or tail behind popular expressions of critically non-transcendent discontent which would then be radicalized through infusions of left ideological expertise. This conceptualization of the appropriate form of emancipatory politics reproduces uncritically both the pluralist elitism that organizes the political culture of American welfare capitalism and the function of intellectuals as professional articulators of other groups' interests. Moreover, acceptance of this

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organizational model ran the gamut of the movement. From the early Maoist fringe's dictum "no investigation, no right to speak" and fetishization of the "clearest analysis" to the maudlin conception of "consciousness raising," all points on the left converged around some notion that certain actors were privileged in their access to information concerning courses of action proper for realization of the interest of relevant collectivities. All converged also around the idea that those who were so privileged somehow were able in principle to divest themselves of their particular interests and to employ their special knowledge on behalf of the mass constituency. This attitude accounted for the credence accorded to notions such as "class suicide" and submersion into the proletariat.

The problem, however, is not so much that that organizational model was undemocratic; after all, some people were and are more knowledgeable and astute than others. The real defect was the difficulty that left activists had in admitting to the historical inexorability of knowledge differentials and their consequences for self-consciousness. This difficulty led to those mystifications of intellectuals' powers of self-transcendence, often appearing in the convoluted guise — as in the later "New Communist" movement — of an intellectually authorized anti-intellectualism. This failure to confront the manifestations in the movement of the social division of intellectual labor as a real problem (one that could not be wished away with incantations) concealed the extent to which ideologies and the capacity to produce them are the commodities through which intellectuals realize their material status in both the mainstream of the social order and its opposition.

As the flurry of activism waned in the early 1970s, those radical intellectuals who did not opt for spiritual renewal sought to remain true to their objectives by either: (1) affixing themselves as intellectual technicians to issue-oriented pluralist advocacy groups; (2) following the pristine course of sectarian Marxism-Leninism; or (3) going on with academic careers to try to make sense of it all. Each option is premised on the notion that the capacity to manipulate language and ideas in specialized ways is of sufficient usefulness as to warrant claims to status and income. The first option assigns intellectuals the role of performing research and analytical services for reform groups and excises the radical-critical function in favor of "getting things done." The second gives intellectuals a priestly role of interpreting sacred texts and organizing the outlooks of the followers. In both cases intellectuals appear to render their services on behalf of some other stratum and thereby to avoid the stigma of self-interestedness.

The third option is most likely to become problematic for left intellectuals because that option entails pursuit of a career that is explicitly identified with the special interests of the stratum. In a way, then, the academic option only makes clear what is clouded in pursuit of activist options: that intellectuals don't float entirely freely to associate themselves with whatever stances in the society they might support. So intellectuals who have opted for the university in part out of a desire to maintain radically critical activity in the face of the decline of opportunities for radical political engagement find themselves confronted directly with a daily practice that produces the ideological legitimations of the current social order, even within their own lives.

There is nothing surprising here; what is new, however, is that the proliferation of leftists in the university has transformed the insularity which previously had assured a certain marginality that in turn protected the otherness of radical critique as an activity. As the left academic presence has grown in university circles, the consequences have been two-sided. On the one hand, it has been possible to create communities of radical discourse within universities and to penetrate more easily

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mainstream journals with wider audiences. On the other hand, the growth of those communities and the greater currency enjoyed by radical ideas have contributed to commodification of radical critique, as is indicated by the recent effusion of a popular secondary literature on critical theory. We now behold the ironic image of the "critique that cannot be integrated" being packaged and mass marketed among academics *and* being transformed into rungs along the professional career ladder. While this phenomenon hardly constitutes a major challenge to orthodoxy and leftists, and while it remains a fact that many other leftists continue to be forced into gypsy academic roles or are squeezed out of the university altogether, it is nonetheless true that the activity of left academics has been integrated into the market structure for intellectual commodities.

In the absence of a sustaining radical movement outside the university, the boundaries separating career and critique increasingly blur. Writing for a critical audience that does not yet exist tends to become increasingly, under the weight of the logic of commodification, writing for the card catalogue and professional advancement. Communities of intellectual resistance, replicating the 1960s counterculture, tend to become marketing sub-cultures and career interest groups in the distributive mechanisms of academic pluralism.

There appears to be a vicious circle here. The integrity of critical intellectual activity is jeopardized by the absence of an emancipatory social movement, and the failure of radical critique to account for itself contributed to the decline of the movement. In addition to the other pressures that led to its demise, radical politics atrophied in the 1970s because radical intellectuals — among the last small producers and entrepreneurs in America — saw their function as one of manufacturing ideas, the distinctive capital of intellectuals, and selling them to mass constituencies, e.g., workers, students, women, welfare recipients, etc. This approach reinforced the marketing principle around which mass capitalism is organized at the everyday level and thereby put the left in the impossible position of trying to fight the mass marketing apparatus on its own terms. Volkswagen had catchier slogans and greater outreach. Moreover, that mode of left activity reinforced the hierarchy of intellectual labor in the society and, in tacitly ensconcing the guild interests of intellectuals, militated against generation of a popular base of critical consciousness and alternative vision in the society.

Moreover, the non-transcendent character of this self-perception of the function of radical intellectuals was implicated in the defective nature of our own alternative vision. Socialism often enough was seen as a rationalized extension of welfare capitalism, one in which the chaos of privately organized production is eliminated and a planning elite of properly conscious revolutionaries administer the social order on behalf of the collectivity. As comes through in the work of Gouldner and Konrad and Szelenyi, one of the attractions of bolshevized Marxism for radical intellectuals is that it legitimates a social-managerial role for them. On the periphery of advanced capitalism this stance provides an opportunity for intellectuals to reorganize society in line with their stratum objectives; in our context it only reproduces the reigning principle of the administered social order.

But what does all this mean for the proper role for leftist intellectuals in the 1980s? The simple response needs to be cast on three levels: existential, intellectual and practical-political. Existentially, we need to strive to maintain self-transparency about ourselves and what we do. This entails maintaining and cultivating critical awareness of the partiality of intellectual interests like all others. Intellectually, we need to

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engage the world in our work in a manner that not only assumes the not-yet extant critical audience but also maintains a fugitive and controversial character. This means that it is essential for us, in addition to doing our academic specialities, to focus systematic critique on the structures that reproduce domination at the level of everyday existence, especially those structures and relations that purport to transcendence — including our own activity.

Finally, in the present situation exhortation to political action has a hollow ring. This is particularly true for intellectuals. After all, it is not an accident that intellectuals appeared as a self-reproducing stratum in the West with the rise of bourgeois society and have grown in significance with its elaboration.

At least from the Jacobins through Marx and 20th-century revolutionaries, radical intellectuals have constituted the unhappy consciousness of the bourgeois order; they express the silent terms of the dialectic, address the irrationalities that block the order from fulfilling its historical potentialities. The circumstances that intellectuals define themselves through mobilization of cultural capital may well decree the ultimate non-transcendence of our activity. This is the sense in which the first page of the *18th Brumaire* applies as well to Marx and us; this is also the sense in which Rosa Luxemburg was even more profound than she knew. The "really existing socialism" is the historical corroboration of the unavoidable embeddedness of intellectuals in the structures of bourgeois hierarchy.

Because their status as proprietors of their own form of capital restricts intellectuals from being an independent source of practically transcendent vision, in the absence of a popular radical movement, opportunities open to us for political action reduce to affixing ourselves to whichever of the myriad, partial (artificially negative?) reform movements respond to our personal preferences, e.g., fighting nuclear power, advocating on behalf of the dispossessed, electing Democrats, saving whales. This activity should be engaged in not only because of a practical need and moral responsibility to act in the world. There is also an epistemological basis for this engagement: intervention helps to ground critique, so long as one retains enough critical distance to avoid becoming a hack for some pluralist interest group, and avoid delusions about the real transformative significance of these movements.

If the temptations to hack or cheer-lead are avoided, it could well be that even the radical intellectuals' partial critique of the social totality and their general bent toward critical discourse could assist those reform movements in transcending their pluralist atomization. In that way, as they "speak intelligently" and then shut up, left intellectuals may be able to participate in the construction of an emancipatory politics.

Moreover, the impetus to political action may well soon receive an objective boost. If social and economic conditions continue to worsen in the U.S. through Reaganite retrenchment, the cheery little market for left-wing ideas in university circles may well be dissipated in the process. Already signs appear, as *U.S. News and World Report* frets over Reds in the university. What probably will happen as a consequence is that those leftists who remain in universities will become more and more careerist; a few will attempt to fight within that setting. Many of those who are driven out and choose to remain intellectuals will become militant in their marginality and will gravitate toward political activism. To that extent, the not-yet-existent audience may be gestating now, and it may be us.

Undoubtedly, much of this activism will take on narrow guild forms. The most that we can hope for is that we will be true enough to the best of our lauded critical

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negativity that we don't sacrifice the slim possibilities that exist for emancipatory action on the altar of our idolatrous beliefs about our abilities to transcend stratum interests and to represent collective subjectivity. That's not much to look forward to, but it has been only the Promethean arrogance of the ideologies that we spin about ourselves that has allowed us to believe that we could escape the tragic grip of history in the first place.

*Jean Bethke Elshtain:* A parable by Kierkegaard in answer to the question "What happens to those who try to warn the present age?" goes like this: "It happened that a fire broke out backstage in a theater. The clown came out to inform the public. They thought it was just a jest and applauded. He repeated his warning, they shouted even louder. So I think the world will come to an end amid general applause from all the wits, who believe that it is a joke." The relevance of this parable to the question at hand is ambiguous. For the position in which leftist intellectuals find themselves is one in which they seem to be talking to one another only and haven't even got a stage from which to address a wider public, even if that public were to respond by thinking all the dire warnings were jokes — which seems better than being ignored or playing to an empty theater. But instead of seeking out an audience, we continue to play to the empty theater and grow more and more self-pitying about how there is no movement anymore, there is nothing to devote our energies to, there seems little for us to do but grow more and more world weary and more and more convinced of our own rectitude. This invites, not so much a reflective reappraisal on our part, but a defensive reassertion that the great mass of people are blindly waltzing into the apocalypse despite our best efforts.

Before tackling the question on the intellectuals, several of its assumptions must be challenged. Consider the notion that our current epoch is, in part, the sad affair we believe it to be because a movement had disappeared. The problem here is that romanticized monolith: the movement. Lurking in the background of this romanticism is the lingering belief that someday, somehow a universal class — if not the proletariat, then some other — will emerge, become energized (preferably by us), take on the cachet of a Movement, and lead us into the revolutionary society. Because we are bedazzled by this image we overlook the vital forms of resistance, the many *movements*, that *grew* in strength and numbers during the 1970s. We do not see these movements, most of them community-based efforts against toxic waste dumping, nuclear power, nuclear war, other forms of ecological destruction, including neighborhood renewal, etc., because they don't fit our image of what an ideal left politics — a movement — should look like.

A second assumption in need of criticism is the suggestion that theory and "our thinking" are stuck in the ozone region as reality passes us by. That should lead us, not into a great lamentation, but into a consideration of how we may have seriously erred in describing the social reality we hoped to grasp and explicate through theory in the first place. Perhaps our conceptual categories and social reality were, all along, passing one another by like proverbial ships in the night. This was not evident at first because so much was happening that seemed to be going our direction. If the problem the question indicates is a real problem, perhaps what is at stake is our devotion to analyses that aim, grandiosely, at providing the Big Picture, the Totality, and other modes of cinemascopic, stereophonic sound social theory. There may be something wrong with this sort of theory, including the manner in which concrete social reality gets washed out in favor of abstractions having only the thinnest relation to what they purport to explain.

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Recently, the left has begun to recognize just how much it lost, politically, when the right became identified with the protection and defense of family life. The contemporary left, linked to various 1960s liberationist movements, including feminism, has been *perceived* by many, perhaps the majority, as a threat to families and community life. There is no space here for either a full-fledged critique of right's position on the family, nor for a full-fledged defense of family life, broadly construed, from a left-wing and feminist perspective. Suffice it to say that on the level of political concerns a defense of the family by feminists and the left must reject the right-wing image of the family as an enbattled retreat, for this militant retrenchment aims to reproduce a version of a male-dominant family that long ago ceased to be the norm.

Instead we must look again at two key terms: liberation and community. Consider the conception of the individual that underscores the liberal capitalist tradition. The individual is viewed as the owner of himself, rather than as part of a 'we' lodged in a wider social network. This individual is free as the sole "proprietor" of the self, free from dependence on others, free to do or be anything so long as no external force forbids it. Society is construed as the aggregate of such individuals engaged in mutually beneficial relations of exchange. Within this framework politics, at best, becomes the pursuit of the best deal; at worst, a war of all against all. The norm for human relations becomes a voluntaristic self-interest. If this concept is applied to marriage and the family, one gets a crudely contractual relation at odds with the traditional vision of marriage as a *social compact*, a solemn promise to create a new unity out of disparate parts.

The social compact is a very different notion from that of contract. It is dramatically at odds with the new Social Darwinism of Reaganomics. The notion of the social compact is of a community into which we are born as indebted, not simply entitled, persons. We owe social obligations to the wider community. Ideally, the values and purposes of this community are enforced by shared norms, not by coercion or manipulation. The idea of the social compact challenges market images. It locates the human being in a dense historic framework, bounded by birth and death. Unlike the static, competitive ethos of contract society, the compact takes account of the changing needs of human beings over the span of a life cycle. Were family members in the present to *explicitly* affirm the values that they *implicitly* acknowledge in living lives of reciprocity, compassion, and concern they would, by definition, throw up opposition to the rampant individualism and pervasive self-interestedness of market society. The family is part of struggles to oppose individualism and a soulless work ethic when it remains true to its overriding purpose to create and sustain vulnerable human life. Families thoroughly pervaded by the consumption ethic, or riddled with aggressive and competitive replication, in miniature, of the struggle for glory in the wider society, have lost their heart and soul.

What feminists and the left need to do is not so much to determine how to enlist the family in political struggle, as if the family were a raw recruit ripe for the plucking but, instead, to figure out how and in what ways the wider social world works to erode the family's integrity, to demean family members, and to strip families of authority. The effort must be two-pronged: to shore up family stability, because it is both the moral and the politic thing to do, by opposing public politics that threaten family existence and, simultaneously, to draw upon lessons we have learned about communities from being family members. We must explicitly recognize that the existence of a communal base, beginning but not ending with families, is the *only* possible explanation for the abiding strength of individuals engaged in long-term social struggles.

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The left has always claimed to be "pro-community." As proof it points to its opposition to plant closings, to neighborhood "renewal," projects that are really neighborhood destruction in the interests of the more powerful, to relocating factories in the Sun Belt as such dislocations are terrible and wrenching for families and communities, to unscrupulous, irresponsible dumping of toxic wastes in communities where it seeps into the water table, contaminates the environment, and threatens everyone, especially children, to full-scale moves toward nuclear energy in the absence of viable methods for getting rid of radioactive waste and in the presence of dangers from leakage or the disaster of a meltdown, to support for food stamps, Medicare, the rights of the disabled, assistance to families of the mentally ill and retarded. The list goes on and on.

Left and feminist opposition to corporatism, the culture of productivity, and the bureaucratic state with its unaccountable, managerial elites can all, by implication, be seen as support for family and community life. What has most corroded and disconnected families are the imperatives of a wasteful, out-of-control engine of production and consumption. This means that opposition to Reaganomics as destructive of community and family life, despite all the soothing claims about the "supply side," must be top priority on our current political agenda. We can translate our ongoing commitments and responses on these issues into something approaching a coherent defense of the family, one that neither romanticizes it unduly nor trashes it unfairly, if we can recover what Simone Weil called our "need for roots" — our legitimate human needs for security and order. A reaffirmation on our part of authority with a human face would do much to allay the plausible fears of many that radicals are little more than a fifth column leading the way to a society wholly populated by self-serving, atomized, 'liberated' individualists.

But as much as ordinary people may recognize a threat to family life and stability in the socially irresponsible policies of corporate America, they feel most deeply threatened and they experience the great threats to their sense of self on questions of sexual identity and sexual norms and rules. The right addresses these issues by identifying wholly with human fears and anxieties, thereby legitimating the worst apprehensions and using concern for the family as a weapon with which to bludgeon their foes. The left and feminists, thus far, have played into the hands of the right as if acting out their roles in a script they have not had a hand in writing. For, simultaneously and without much thoughtful reflection as to the possibility of tensions within their own position, we have celebrated community yet embraced every movement which called itself "liberationist." For the most part we have either finessed or dismissed as reactionary *all* opposition to a sexual ethos that treats sexual partners as consumable commodities, all questioning of or opposition to abortion on demand up to and including the second trimester, any criticism of the particular *forms* the gay liberation movement has taken (for example: should *anyone's* sexual identity become an all-inclusive standard for political action?) and so on. Wholesale sexual liberationism and settled community life do not make for an easy match; indeed, in the hard-line statements of either position (and many radicals and feminists embrace both) they are patently incompatible. The most important point is that a left or a feminism which has not confronted the strains internal to its twin embrace of sexual liberation and community has not yet earned the right to be either believed or trusted by a wider constituency. To confuse the pursuit of pleasure with the cause of justice; to label any restriction (whether socially imposed or individually chosen) on sexual behavior as unacceptable repression is to take sides in America's cultural warfare in implacable opposition to the vast majority (not all of them moral!).

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Until feminism and the left offer some coherent sense of what constraints would be acceptable in the ideal communitarian world, we will fail to gain a wider hearing. We cannot wrest the microphone from those for whom the questions and solutions to individual rights and legitimate community constraints are simple — a return to traditional verities and rigid norms — until we have something to shout into it that indicates we have struggled with the problem, that we have not simply embraced whatever got tossed into the not-so-free marketplace of political ideas with the label 'liberation now.' Is constraint, or even restraint, a dirty word and nasty notion to be evaded and avoided? If this makes you nervous, then you must face up to the fact that an ideal of family existence and egalitarian domesticity that can serve as the foundation of a wider community demands that we rethink that which is most troubling and difficult of all: human sexuality, human sexual and social identity, and the constraints required if we honestly, rather than rhetorically, adopt a communitarian ethos with its social theory of human beings. Until we take up the sexual questions reflectively rather than pouncing on them reactively, we will not even get into the arena with the right-wing purveyors of prefabricated wisdom, much less win the debate.

*Charles Levin:* Intellectuals of the left should try to stay healthy and to live happy, fulfilling lives. This means that we must stop worrying that our critical activities are not rooted in the material base. For that matter, we should stop trying to figure out what a material base is. This is a useless pursuit, and we shall all be much more content when we give it up.

Of course, this kind of theoretical breakthrough will leave us with more energy to cope with the irrationality and domination around us. Apartheid and the bomb will still seem as bad as they always did, but we will no longer befuddle ourselves and frighten our friends by acting as though there is something holy about our opposition to them. Some of us may even take up painting or get interested in amateur photography.

In fact, radical intellectuals would all be a lot better off, and much easier to get along with, if they could simply diminish their vested interest in misery. Surely the best impulses on the left, including Marx's, could not have been motivated only by a grieving sense of injustice or the experience of deprivation, but also by a perception of limitless possibilities and the belief that life could be much more interesting than we have organized it to be. The reformed leftist intellectual will therefore no longer delude himself into thinking that, for example, Reagan's policies (foreign or domestic) will somehow revitalize the left. He will no longer say that people are "being taught a lesson" while he eagerly awaits their return to the fold. On the contrary, the new leftist intellectual of the 1980s will realize that ordinary people all over the world are aware of the left's failures and aware that the left still offers no livable alternative to parliamentary democracy. We will no longer be scandalized when perfectly intelligent people, given half an opportunity, continue to take a chance on the open capitalist market for goods and status. Indeed, we will only experience regret that for the immediate present our own choice is just as limited.

Realizations such as these will unclutter our minds splendidly and result in a marvelous sense of relief. We will begin to notice that objects exist in the world and that it is more fun to exchange them with other people than to wait helplessly and passively on the pleasure of large bureaucracies of distribution, such as the corporation or the state. Recognizing that objects can be interesting and that people are interested in doing things with things as well as with words, we may even decide

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that we need a totally new theory that will account for this starting fact in a new, human order. Critical theory will then recommence by admitting that the "material" is not the substance of "production" and "consumption" (a viewpoint that requires a "rational" theory of distribution, as if to "exorcise" matter from the sphere of human subjects). This new theory will be concerned with multiplying social forms, rather than with finding and imposing an ideal model. The problem will be how to free up situations and how to open them to each other, rather than how to liberate people for their own good. In short, we will be less worried about ridding the world of things, and will want to add to it instead.

*Joan Roelofs:* I have a different perspective from that of leftists shaped by the 1960s and associated with the movement. By 1961 I was a graduate student, college teacher, and also a Marxist, which made me deplored by most of my colleagues and professors. I was never part of any movement: my individualistic needs are at war with my socialist political ideals. Today I would define myself as a utopian socialist, a tradition from which Marx and Engels derived their greatest contributions. My "utopianism" lies in a desire to see a total transformation of our way of life, the elimination of all socially created causes of human misery, and a profound respect for our biological nature and the conditions necessary to sustain healthy life on the planet. Socialism in the United States cannot be simply a more equitable distribution of the same old stuff.

How can any progress towards such grandiose aims occur, given the hostile environment and the fragmentation and low spirits of the left? The first steps must be to activate the left and to change the environment. The challenge is to unite all those who wish to see a socialist United States. Disagreements about whether the best road to socialism is through educational, political, industrial or philosophical means should not prevent the unity of all those seeking a non-violent transition. If the goal is paramount, surely we can collaborate to find out what means (or combinations of means) are fruitful. We must forget quarrels over past and present heroes and villains and our differences on foreign policy questions (where we can have little impact in any case).

At the outset, leftists united should avoid attempts to create any new formal organizations. Better to join whatever organizations already exist, and to avoid being diverted by leadership struggles in those. The first step should be to form supportive networks, for it is extremely difficult to challenge conventional society from myriad directions without sources of intellectual and emotional support.

The next step must be a vast educational effort. Here is where the specific skills of intellectuals could be used to promote social change. Intellectuals must stop talking to each other exclusively, and start talking to everybody else: not merely sympathetic workers or college students, but everybody, and especially young people. Of course, there is little idiom for this kind of discourse. This must be *created*. Images of socialism, the best of socialism's past, present and future, must be presented in ways that are not only understandable by the vast majority of Americans, but are addressed to their needs — emotional, intellectual, material or whatever. If we assume superiority over ordinary mortals we will remain an ingrown society, doomed to polishing perpetually each other's footnotes. We must start where people are, and try to convince them that their lives would be enhanced, and their own values attainable, by a socialist organization of society. It would help if leftists ceased to huddle together in Greenwich Village, Cambridge or Berkeley and proceeded forthwith to middle America. (Besides, I would appreciate some comrades here.)

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Socialism has terrible public relations in this country. The typical images of socialism that Americans have range from Soviet totalitarianism, Swedish suicide epidemics, low productivity in Britain because of socialized medicine, and the more sophisticated, "coteries of intellectuals on the left bank of the Mississippi tossing dialectics at each other." Few Americans have any knowledge of the 19th-century communitarian experiments throughout this country, or the early 20th-century political victories of socialists. Speakers or books that would excite or even interest most people are hard to name. (At a recent socialist conference I attended, no one could name a book appropriate for a young teenager.) This chasm between "theorists" and "people" was not always so great: Bellamy, Debs and Thomas, and, in Britain, Morris, Blatchford, Tawney, Shaw and Wells, were effective publicists of socialism.

Today, people may have little interest in soap-box orators. Images of socialism will have to take a variety of forms: radio or TV shows, books, magazines, plays, movies, games, street theater, scale models, econometric models, computer programs, new religions, world's fairs, guided tours abroad, youth groups, organizations, and communes. Only after an educational effort has created a positive interest will it be possible to create socialist institutions — political, economic, social, cultural or educational — throughout the country. There is little hope for socialism unless it is embodied in people's daily lives. This is true not only for people "out there" but for intellectuals as well. Merely receiving a newsletter, or attending an editorial meeting every few months, does not enable one to live and hence to communicate socialism. Perhaps the most important group to reach (as religious organizations know well) is that of teenagers, whose energies are now frequently expended in destructive ways. Building a better world might capture the imagination of some of them: probably now the most alienated of the whole population, if the suicide rate is any indication.

Local socialist institutions, once they become effective enough, could form the basis for a political movement and the contesting of elections (if that should seem appropriate). By building socialism from the ground up, both the centralizing and decentralizing socialists might be able to reconcile their differences. Of course, one can't predict how things will turn out. A central task of leftist networks would be to figure out what to do next: to make a socialist society out of the bits and pieces we now have and those which will be created.

This is a major challenge: not only must apathy and fear (including our own) be overcome, but we must be prepared for reprisals and disruptions by the forces of law and order, and by business as usual. Jobs and families and spirits must be sustained: activism does not always impress tenure committees. The task of convincing people in all conditions of life that they would be better off in a socialist society requires a true believer. Are there enough of us who are sufficiently motivated? Cults and charismatic leaders may not be forthcoming, or better yet, may be considered undesirable.

Philosophers of the world arise! You have nothing to lose but your caves!

*John Fekete:* It would be misleading to contextualize the roles of intellectuals with sole reference to the metaphysics of a historical script and a movement which by its presence or, in the event, its absence, saturates the definition. There is no need to confine perception to images of ebb tides and beached whales, to a left-right binary pairing, or to the pathos of privileged roles and underprivileged intellectuals with only theory at their disposal. If what is really at stake are coordinates in the spirit of some kind of transformative or emancipatory project, then a series of tasks can always be found. There are always stretches of darkness that can be shot through with light, exchanges of coded equivalence that can be restored to exchanges of responsibility and

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reciprocity, dessicated connections that can be revitalized in generous community.

Perhaps the question presupposes that much. What about the "left" intellectual then? The question implies its own answers, especially by raising the problem of the universities: build political consciousness, faculty unions, reform the universities, integrate intellectuals into the community, organize intellectuals politically as intellectuals. Certainly universities have drifted from their charter function to serve as the organized centers in Western societies for the critical exploration of knowledge and the reproduction of long-range values. The long march through these institutions, then, to redeem some portion of their logic and resources for hermeneutical purposes rather than operational, technical purposes, is bound to be worthwhile.

In general, the role of intellectuals is to develop intellectual culture. This is not altered by the fact that the rhythms of intellectual reconstruction are different today from what they were in the 1960s. And if to some degree intellectual culture is to be defined against the universities, there is nothing new in that. Unless tenure doth make cowards of us all, it provides precisely that protection of academic-intellectual freedom that should make a critical commitment and normative deviation possible. No pathos there, for even if the 1980s turns out not to be richly creative, there is still the project of preserving the space of intellectual culture and sustaining the vitality of the human heritage for a later renaissance, either within the universities and-or, if their heteronomy is aggravated, in alternative institutions.

Beyond this point, intellectual efforts can be variably defined. Theorize the millenium, some will say; stop nuclear war and assure survival, say others. I take an ecumenical view here, with an asymmetrical bias: I would resist the excessive claims of immediacy and invite consideration of ways to assimilate the exigencies of basic existence to the potentialities of a larger life. There is no shortage of targets for criticism nor of opportunities for practical challenge: the threat of war, the provocation of nature's revenge, the disintegration of cities, the deepening of domination, the universalization of manipulation, the bureaucratization of community, the impoverishment of life on the threshold of abundance. But there is no shortage either of innovations — indeed, the American social system thrives on them — and these have vast social and cultural implications, opening dense opportunities for realignment of relations and definitions: the elimination of disease (e.g., smallpox), the imminence of genetic intervention, scientific life extension (perhaps immortality), space migration (and interspecies cultural hybridization), intelligence expansion (and leaps in evolution of being toward mind), the automation of drudgery, the globalization of electronic information processing, radical shifts in perception and philosphy, the physical success of mankind, the opening of a post-terrestrial future. Not achieved in the 1980s, of course, but embryonically present and developing. In and around all these, as always, the rebellions of rising expectations will flavor life with the principle of hope.

But here we touch on revolutions in our objectified second nature and in our everyday lives. They are worth attention in themselves, and if they can be attached to humanizing projects, to the restoration of human scale, the decentralization and de-hierarchization of social relations, so much the better. In any case, these processes implicate everyone, intellectual or not. The new information milieu, moreover, blurs the distinction between the intelligentsia and others: a telematic society geared to the production, movement and consumption of information requires an ever-growing intelligentsia to operate it; indeed, the generalist strengths of the traditional humanist intellectual to ask meaningful questions and recognize salient patterns must become

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the basic capabilities of anyone who wants to extract information from a data bank. The implications here for educational institutions and pedagogy in general are dramatic.

But the main point is that the hyperrealism of life on the surface of a cultural Moebius strip that loops back over on itself in a seamless continuity of self-signification involves us together in a drama of simulation where pleasure principle and reality principle are coded models like everything else. Everyone, "intellectual" or not, with prospects of achievement proportional to the scope of the affinity group that is willing to share together a version of reality, can undertake to transgress the dominant codes of social control and reprogram the nervous system and the institutional arrangements for physical and metaphysical success. The problems of effective agency in this context are breathtaking, but they offer no end of honest challenges to dynamic and creative people, including "intellectuals." Why not seize the time and put our beliefs wherever they will do the most good, *mutatis mutandis*?

The one point worth remembering above all others in the great orientational crisis of our civilization at this moment — when paradigms are shifting under immense pressure and no intellectual tradition is unaffected or satisfactory on its own — is that we are, not for the first time in America life, on historical frontiers. We have no fixed *terminus ad quem* and no fixed schedules for arrival. We have no historical analogies for where we are; we do not even know where we are. I would not interpret this in the pessimistic sense of having lost our assigned way. We are pathbreakers in America for the species, pathbreakers as a species on the planet, even though we quarrel among ourselves, mistreat others, and threaten to be maladaptive. I would see this situation as an opportunity. The rest is a wager. Though it may feel slow and constipated at times, we are free to bet that the 1960s was the beginning of a new enlightenment that will carry us with it as we carry it with us. Let us bet that the human adventure will not have reached its pinnacle in a Kansas suburb or the binary towers of the New York Trade Center, or even in *Telos*. I would bet that the adventure has barely begun, that waves of movement are around us, and that other waves will follow. As intellectuals, why not call for and enact a regroupment of optimism? The tides are on the rise.

*Paul Buhle:* I'm framing my comments in part as a reply to the question and in part as a response to the life of Lukacs, who to my mind is the prototypical leftist intellectual of this century. There is much that is instructive in his experience which is also worth reflecting on in our own time.

Today, I read Lukacs differently than I did 10 or 15 years ago. He was dead wrong to choose the USSR and the Comintern as the representatives of progressive humanity, and worse to use his intellectual brilliance to defend the indefensible. But the mistake no longer seems unbelievable, something wholly outside the scope of my own experience. Intellectuals fall into political situations not of their own making, very often permitting their abstractions to build a psychological defense against the really tragic proportions of the movement they have chosen. At best, they then demonstrate their commitment (sometimes their independent-mindedness) in the face of personal danger and sacrifice.

In periods of retreat, it is easy to be "independent," although that generally means no serious involvement outside the study and the classroom. When things start to move, you strike up an alliance locally, nationally, internationally. During the 1970s it might have been the Unification Churches of the Left, the CP or various competing Trotskyist and Maoist would-be vangards — or a laid-back cultural outfit, or a one-issue local group. But there always has been and will be politics: The belief that

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intellectuals can set the terms is a self-destructive illusion. It is self-destructive because the luxury of real independence, non-involvement and personal sectarianism begets guilt which (along with the sense of material privilege) begs political psychosis or totalitarian commitment.

Much has changed since Lukacs' prime. Above all, the Comintern illusion of one world communist movement has been shattered forever. But there is an important kernel of continuity: important and menacing. As C.L.R. James sought to elucidate in his *Mariners, Renegades and Castaways*, intellectuals will find themselves inevitably trapped between those who govern and those who are governed. The choice seems simple and moral. But not so fast: during social collapse, those who stand amidst the two groups and see that the old system cannot prevail, develop their own conceptions of the future. They stir the muck, they lead the unions and the reform parties. The most radical speak for socialism. In the crisis, however, a deep ambivalence surfaces. They hate the chaos from above; most fear the chaos from below. And the variety of theories and strategies elucidated — neo-vanguardism, radical premises with liberal conclusions, varieties of technocracy, etc. — have in common the obstruction of *direct* democracy, people seizing institutions into their own hands, in the name of some representative form that maintains elites in power, even at the potential cost of fatally wounding the revolutionary momentum. The substitution of classroom for class made the lines easier to draw in the 1960s than they had been earlier; now we face complexities again. Somehow, the revolutionary intellectual must set upon a course to bolster the Center-Left against the Right, and simultaneously help prepare the powerless in their own understandings, their own visions of a free society, their final cutting of the nexus between class societies (of all types) and socialism.

What seems menacing is that intellectuals cannot see through the whole process, and are indeed constitutionally inclined to drop off somewhere along the way. It is parties, and organizations of all kinds, that offer writers and artists public recognition, the columns in which to publish, the attention, the sense of doing valuable work. University life, for many veterans of the 1930s, '40s, and '60s, is a substitution or in part an extension of the university's intellectual atmosphere. And in both cases, with much of the same cameraderie, old-boy-network (the old folks met in Brooklyn or at a demo in Iowa City instead of Yale or the Army) and semi-disguised competitiveness. The hardest thing is to cut through the layers and find mediation to popular life, in any quasi-personal or quasi-political form. Periods pass when it hardly matters: very little is possible anyway. The time comes when housewives, neighborhood kids, blue-, pink-, and white-collar workers are eager for insight and advice. The unprepared intellectual will then either feel more isolated than ever, or go out selling copies of the *Workers Dreadnought* at the factory gates, guilty as self-sentenced in either case.

Here Lukacs' example — both negative and positive — is extraordinarily useful. For contrary to the professional anti-communists who have chosen to believe that the capitulation to Leninism was either personal power-seeking or a death wish, the real causes are profoundly philosophical and material. Lukacs felt a tragic sense of history's constraints, and without the immediacy of the October Revolution and its Central European reverberations, might have gone along in the Frankfurt School detachment of the hyper-intellectual German Jew. He came to the revolution as reality. He came to Leninism as the categorical imperative.

Like Trotsky, once he converted to the vanguard party he closed his eyes to other possibilities. Like Trotsky, he remained indifferent to the significance of the Russian degeneration: the reorganization of the *entire* revolutionary project. Neither could get

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past the sense that as reflection of economics and politics the transformation of culture could come only when the revolutionary process reached a conclusion, and only through vanguards. Perhaps, to be generous, the possibility of cultural activities as *formative*, preparing ordinary people to seize power in their own name, could only arrive when the old illusions about a world strategic-combat center had been flushed away by history.

To be accurate and less generous, the reverence and perpetuation of the Leninist model by Trotsky, Lukacs and almost the entire generation of radical intellectuals in the 1920s-1940s was tremendously costly to the whole prospect for world socialism. Everywhere, activists had to figure out practically from scratch the real relation of a mass in motion to leadership and to unburden themselves of misconceptions along the way. We got more or less beyond the old slogans too little and too late to help the movement clarify its aims and stave off renascent vanguardism, or terrorism, or social democracy. Real counter-examples from the 1930s might not have made any decisive difference in the outcome of the last wave. But we surely would have come away with more forces, more collective integrity and inner strength, more perception of how the women's movement following on the heels of the black and student movements, had permanently altered our means and our goals. Discontinuities from the pre-New Left past notwithstanding, we would not have felt so much that we jumped out of history and then been plopped down again hopeless and helpless.

I have worked with Maoists, Communists, Social Democrats, Trotskyists, Peaceniks, Hippies, Punks, Christians and an astonishing array of others. I have certainly made my share of mistakes along the way. I have also been hornswoggled politically and morally, had my work rewritten and ripped out of context, the pages of my journals used against me, and spent years trying to understand why Left people so often replicate the manipulative and jesuitical behavior standard in the business and academic worlds. Things have improved lately, because morale improves with political opportunities. But the *modus operandi* is likely to be about the same — cooperating with this group or that, trying to see who will find ways to clarify issues aesthetically, theoretically and strategically, waiting to see who will find the means to work with the left-of-center forces now taking the organizational lead in reaching out to the rebellious pockets of public life. Lukacs' path is, in a way, a cartography of the road that every radical intellectual might have taken and might still take. And a reflection finally upon the danger of an intellectualism which does not seek to abolish itself as a separate category of society.

To be *and* not to be: that is our question. Unlike the upper class Lukacs, living through the first modern world-revolutionary period, we have the historical (and personal) experience to see that his absolutes ended in a *cul de sac*. We should be able to see how he drew false conclusions from valid premises, because he lacked real knowledge of politics and of the world around him. He was eager to serve the party. But even in his sympathies of 1956 he never grasped the role an intellectual would play in the dissolution and replacement of the party by the working class, students, farmers, neighborhoods, the people as whole. Nothing in his past demonstrated to him that kind of work Polish left-wing intellectuals carried on during 1980-82, not foregoing their own special training in guilty "service" but rather finding the means of putting just those talents and inclinations to use. In so doing they help us move toward abolishing that dichotomy of mental and manual labor which has tortured society for an eon. Only in realizing our intellectual capacities do we overcome ourselves as intellectuals. It is a meaningful paradox that we must work harder at our identity in order to dissolve it altogether.

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Perhaps this solution to the identity problem seems too abstract, too distant and too sombre for our current meanderings in the belly of the monster. Let me risk another formula: our role is to combine the unlikely elements of a proto-revolutionary mix, something no one else is quite situated to do. Local labor activists, left-wing artists, punk-struck radicalized kids, militant religious types, practical jokers of the Left — who else has the energy and contacts to encourage practical and spiritual alliances, to raise the journalism and propaganda of the movement to an artistic level, to turn the bitter irony of the system against its perpetrators? I do not know how the experiments now underway and the many in gestation will work out; nobody can provide any guarantees ahead of time. My point is that the problems of intellectuals are not really personal ones, or rather are personal precisely because they are foremost social. Joining an organization or staying out of one will not bring any easy solutions. Experience should demonstrate anew that we are allies, facilitators, educators, no matter where we go and what we attempt. If so, we are not to imagine too little or too much of ourselves, that we are a miserable petty-bourgeoisie or the World's Intelligence. Think about it. We do not want to endanger our own arduous labors or spoil the fun up ahead.

*John Keane:* The question is difficult and important. It is also too specific to the American context. Therefore, the following remarks run somewhat outside the boundaries of the question. I would like to start by recalling a thesis of Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge. Some years ago, they proposed that autonomous public spheres typically develop and flourish within historical phases marked by crises, war, surrender and revolt. In view of the fact that 'late' capitalist systems, especially in Europe, are nowadays pressured by a range of novel quandaries, political arguments and struggles, this thesis takes on a renewed significance. To begin with, it is rather obvious that in Europe the old debate over power and democracy has resurfaced as a central theme of political and social life. For the time being, reality is not so "refractory" in Europe: "things" *are* happening which *are* worth commitments of time and energy. Thus, few bureaucratic institutions today are immune from the criticism of "autonomous" movements. These movements express a process of desubordination, of a rise in the level of political activity and radical democratic expectations. This is often articulated (as in Britain at the moment) through the leftward lurch of "radicalization" of sections of existing social democratic parties. Equally, it is expressed in unofficial and highly unpredictable ways — through votes for candidates and parties outside the old welfare state consensus (e.g., the Alternatives in West Berlin), by electoral absenteeism and massive abstentions from formal political processes (as in the various regional separatist movements) and, most remarkably, through situational protest of the kind generated by sexual politics, environmental and peace movements. These desubordination tendencies — and that is all they are — originate directly or indirectly from the fact that the mode of operation of the bureaucratic welfare state project is self-contradictory. The welfare state's self-proclaimed *political* task of responding to various social claims (i.e., of responsive "problem solving") contradicts its chronic reliance on depoliticized, bureaucratic strategies (i.e., on "problem definition and control" mechanisms). This self-contradiction is not limited to welfare state strategies. It marks all bureaucratic organizations, including capitalist corporations and trade unions. Inasmuch as they typically institute decisions about all matters in the absence of discussion and control from below, bureaucratic organizations are antithetical to democratic public life. Especially within the present phase of 'late' capitalism, autonomous public spheres cannot be

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allowed to develop within either society or the state. The contemporary drift of all European welfare states in the direction of heavily armed nuclear states is not the only symptom of this authoritarianism. These states have always relied on strategies that reinforce non-decisions, thereby producing a kind of marginality at the very centers of state decision-making. In other words, they have consistently adopted means of policy-making that selectively co-opt, suffocate or ignore demands for change in the existing allocation of benefits and privileges of property, status and power. This administrative restriction of the scope of potential political conflict is not only a self-protective device on the part of the state. It is also a necessary feature of a political system that must take note of the immense "obstruction potential" of other bureaucratic organizations (organized labor and mainly oligopoly capital), on whose cooperation this system structurally depends for its legitimacy and effectiveness. These social groups — especially fractions of capital — not only have privileged access to institutions of state policy-making; they also tend to determine the form and content of what can be officially negotiated. This corporate bias, as one English historian put it recently, predisposes welfare states to operate technocratically, in accordance with the lowest common denominator of policies designed to avoid trouble. Political decisions are made not through adversary politics and widespread public discussion, but by way of an informally organized, usually arcane and inaccessible bargaining process between the state and leaders of these bureaucratic governing institutions. Under late capitalist conditions, bureaucratic compromise and consensus is the mark of official politics. This is the point on which practically every new autonomous movement in Europe agrees.

What does all this have to do with leftist intellectuals who survive the trauma of being made redundant, or of being transformed into gypsy scholars who must travel across the country just to keep alive and sane? I'd like to focus on one possible response to which the question nostalgically alludes. It is very tempting, especially under pressure from the previously mentioned desubordination tendencies, to speak of ourselves as critics of ideology. It sounds radical and convincing. After all, ideology is a political concept: it addresses, from a critical and anti-authoritarian standpoint, the legitimacy or credibility of material relations of power. Understanding ourselves as critics of ideology also allows us to draw on a tradition that is heavily indebted to Marx. It was Marx, of course, who first seized the concept of ideology from the hands of the ruling powers. This was Marx's reversal: the theory of ideology ceased to be associated with those *other* meddling intellectuals whose concern it was to develop new, subtle, and effective technologies of policing and social pacification. Consequent upon Marx's reversal, the concept also ceased to be synonymous (as it had been for Napoleon) with unrealistic dithering. According to the Marxian project of ideology-criticism, bourgeois ideology serves to blur and conceal social division; it provides a condition of false unity among potentially conflicting groups, principally, as we know, wage labor and capital. Bourgeois ideology functions, albeit unsuccessfully, to render relations of social power as self-transparent, as beyond question and therefore as outside history. It must therefore be ruthlessly criticized. Now, within the present European context, there seems to be a natural affinity between this Marxian-inspired project of ideology criticism and new autonomous movements. Whether this alliance is plausible, however, and whether it makes sense for leftist intellectuals to understand themselves as critics of ideology, is at least a moot point.

Yet, the allegation that radical intellectuals who oppose deception, who seek to "unmask" and abolish ideological distortion, are themselves deceived, must be taken

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seriously. The allegation, typically, comes from within the confident ranks of the post-structuralist movement — very popular in Europe at present. This controversy over intellectuals as ideology critics has come up at this time for at least three reasons. First, it has been suggested that contemporary forms of legitimation of power have cast off the old rosy complexion of classical bourgeois ideology. The "end of ideology" movement, of course, served as the techno-bureaucratic version of this thesis. Remarkably, some supporters of the critical opposition to "late" capitalist societies have provided their own variations on this theme. Adorno expressed this in his own inimitable way, remarking that ideology and present-day reality are converging because reality becomes its own ideology. This theme is echoed in Habermas' references to the "glassy background ideology" of science and technology, and in Claude Lefort's discussion of the "invisible ideology," which is seen to suppress a sense of the contingency of the present by encouraging the belief that everything is sayable, communicable and therefore intelligible. A second reason for the loss of credibility of the project of unveiling ideology concerns its faithful quest for objectivity or scientificity. The darkness of ideology, according to cruder versions of this project, can only be dispelled in the bright gaze of intellectuals' "scientific" knowledge. Recent critics of this strategy of scientifically unmasking illusion, of making the world dance to the tune of theory's explanations, point to its identitarian presumption that theory can generate something like absolute knowledge of the social totality. These critics further insist that this identitarian illusion is linked directly to the anti-political, bureaucratic dream of a world where all contradictions have been transparently resolved — a world where activity has at last been stripped of its contingency and ambiguity. Accordingly, the critics of identitarianism cast the nets of their indictment widely to include not only Marx's critique of ideology as failed or pseudo-science, but also the positivist view that ideology manifests itself (as Parsons put it) as a discrepancy between what is believed and what can be established as scientifically correct; this appears, too (especially in France and England) in Althusser's wholly misleading assurance that knowledge of social formations is produced in and through an autonomous discourse which both speaks "in ideology" yet tries to break with ideology. Finally, and not unrelated to this problem of identitarianism, one rightly hears nowadays that the Marxian critique of ideology in particular has consistently avoided questions concerning language or, more precisely, the discursive character of social life. Thus, ideology has been understood — wrongly — as a form of misrepresentation of a subterranean reality of material life processes. These processes are understood as the pre-discursive point of origin of ideology, a point of origin which is also the point of truth that contradicts the false "nothingness" of ideology. Accordingly, the Marxian critics of ideology sustain themselves on a belief in precisely what can never be attained: the quest for forms of language and life which have been purged of all error and treacherous density.

No doubt, these three challenges to the legitimacy of the radical concept of ideology have generated their own enigmas. They have nevertheless indicated a range of difficult theoretical questions which are of vital importance to leftist intellectuals with a political conscience. In these times, it seems imperative to work through these (and other) questions: is the form and content of legitimation of power in "late" capitalist societies different from that of the classical bourgeois era? If so, what are the implications for our understanding of the opposition groups that struggle against the multiple unfreedoms of the present? Must the project of ideology-criticism necessarily succumb to the illusory quest to unveil origins? Can our theoretical discourses, rather,

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restrain themselves from absolutizing their results by acknowledging their own ambiguous historicity, their implication within relations of power, the dependence of their validity claims upon their addressees? Can it be admitted that ideology is not merely froth on the surface of "really real" relations, that power is not a materially determined entity but a ubiquitous relation inextricable from its symbolic representations? Can democratic political opposition (of which leftist intellectuals are one moment) become synonymous with an openness to difference, to contradiction, to the contingencies of historical creation, without at the same time succumbing to an uncritical decisionism and deference to existing power relations? I could go on. Amid this barrage of questions, one point seems certain. To speak of the role of leftist intellectuals is to move beyond the brick walls, flourescent lights and *paperasserie* of our colleges and universities, for which some of us have contempt and no great ambition. To discuss the role of intellectuals and the work we do is to enter also into the concerns, threats and choices posed by the present historical conjuncture. It is to analyze ourselves, to open ourselves up to movements who demand an overcoming of the programmed society (to use Touraine's term) through open-ended discussion and resistance. This resistance, and our engagement with it, is no doubt not necessarily analogous to the breezes of an approaching dawn. The hopes we share with it in our work are not free from the pressures of worry. In every dream, hope and demand to push harder and further, there are pessimistic undertones — reflections of uncertainty and the looming possibility of defeat. Furthermore, the democratic resistance to late capitalist systems assumes the form of an eclectic mosaic. Under these conditions, the bureaucratization process by no means effects its own destruction by raising against itself, so to speak, the mass of the dispossessed. All talk of new and old working classes, "humanity" or "the people" must be given up. So, too, must the anticipation (of Touraine, for instance) of the emergence of a new social movement which tomorrow will take over the central role that the workers' movement once played. In our times, the scope and location of conflicts are many and varied; their heterogeneity does not necessarily tend to dissolve and converge toward a single revolutionary class or movement. Autonomous movements institute a plurality of public spheres. Notwithstanding their fragmented character (which may in fact serve to confound "classic" state responses), these movements signal the emergence of a new political theme under post-welfare state conditions. This theme assumes the form of something approaching a generalized confrontation between, on the one hand, administrative-bureaucratic attempts (championed by the new liberal and neo-corporatist movements) to restructure the welfare state and social life for a new phase of capitalist accumulation and state power; and, on the other hand, these movements' struggles to "speak and be heard," to establish qualitatively new forms of political relations in which "public spheres" of mutuality, discussion and concern with concrete "needs" predominate. To turn a blind eye and deaf ear to this confrontation is to act in bad faith.

*Paul Breines:* What exactly is the role of intellectuals in the 1980s? The exact role is constituted by the following tasks:

1. Write reviews for *Telos*.

2. Oppose vigorously the theory of artificial negativity propagated by our editor and some comrades.

3. Work to keep alive the obsolescent activity of thinking.

4. Work to keep alive libertarian, feminist, socialist ideals and values; refuse to leave in the hands of cultural counter-revolutionaries right and left the task of

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appraising the legacies of the 1960s New Left and the contours of future movements. In this connection, work our way through the following deep dilemmas and paradoxes:

A. Some of the utopian hopes of the 1960s did fizzle; some others backfired.

B. The realities of police state socialism, with the situation in Poland casting the most recent shadow, make any easy articulation of socialist ideals catch in the throat.

C. A good portion of the *Telos* crowd is entering middle age, when we are supposed to overcome our youthful excesses, grow up, and settle down in the great Hegelian *Versöhnung* with reality.

D. The accumulated pressures against articulating revolutionary ideas and values are strong.

E. The accumulating need to articulate such ideas and values is equally strong: New Deal liberalism is culturally exhausted while Reagan heads the most ideological administration in modern U.S. history. It articulates values, morality, hopes, visions — white, patriarchal, possessive-individualist, etc — but visions and values nonetheless.

F. And this, presumably, is our turf.

5. Pay close attention to how really weird people are and avoid thinking in terms of any logic of interests in history.

6. Remember we are neither leaders nor the bearers of consciousness. We are voices.

7. Form an invisible church of born-again libertarian, feminist, anti-racist, anti-homophobic, anti-militarist, anti-nuke socialists-anarchists-pacifists, and let into our hearts the scattered little sparks of community, hope, and renewal in *this* time and place, in *these* rotten days.

*David Gross:* At first this question seemed easy, but now I'm stopped by the third word. What exactly is an "intellectual"? We need to know this before we can decide what he or she is supposed to do. Others will have argued that the intellectual should do this or that, but I want to say that nothing whatever will be done unless one becomes a *certain kind* of intellectual.

It seems to me that an intellectual in the most elemental sense is someone who is vitally concerned with ideas. But to say this immediately raises an important question: how does the intellectual relate to or establish a connection with the ideas that concern him? I would say that there are three ways to do this: explicating ideas, advocating them, or living them.

The first kind of intellectual loves ideas and enjoys talking about them. If he's a leftist, he enjoys talking about leftist ideas. Whatever the case, this type treats ideas as mental constructs and nothing more. They remain insubstantial. No real personal significance is attached to them, and they call forth no ethical imperatives. Though any intellectual's ideas may have meaning when considered abstractly — that is, they can be discussed, analyzed, dissected or refuted — their mere articulation has little intrinsic meaning. For an intellectual of this sort, there is no noticeable link, no determinate connection, between an idea and a life, though many of the greatest thinkers since Rousseau have insisted that there *should be*.

The second type of intellectual moves from interpreting ideas to *advocating* them. When this happens something interesting takes place. The intellectual begins to *believe* in what he says, which gives him a wholly new relationship to the ideas he discusses. They become internalized. They literally become *his* ideas, and he begins espousing them as truer or more valuable than other ideas. When this occurs, an idea

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is turned into a belief, which alters not only one's relationship to the idea but to the world at large, since a firmly held belief changes an individual's entire set of values and perceptions. If an intellectual should come to believe in so-called leftist ideas, then he will perceive, think about, and interpret the world from a leftist perspective.

The third type of intellectual advances from endorsing ideas to living them. He transforms his thoughts into beliefs and then enacts them instead of merely feeling allegiance to them. Should this happen something new again takes place. Thoughts and beliefs are transmuted into practices. This establishes another sort of relationship to ideas. Now they are not, like beliefs, just displaced inwardly and left at that, but a further step is taken: they are manifested outwardly, in performances, in which case a person says through his actions what it is he stands for. When this occurs, the intellectual becomes *totally implicated* in what he thinks. He sees it as absolutely necessary to narrow the gap, every moment of his life, between his ideas and his deeds.

These distinctions could be put differently by saying that whereas the first kind of intellectual might "entertain" an idea, and the second might "hold" a belief, the third is "gripped" by convictions. Where convictions exist, the intellectual is not the embracer but is embraced by his ideas or beliefs. Probably without exception, all the heroes and heroines of leftists are of the third type. But how many leftist intellectuals, including all of us writing here, have moved beyond the first or second type?

If we can't make a very good accounting of ourselves, maybe it's necessary to ask a couple more questions: how does an idea get transmitted into a belief, and how is a belief transposed into a conviction?

It appears to me that an idea becomes a belief when it is actively assimilated into a structure of feelings. In this fashion, emotions are attached to ideas, or ideas are anchored in emotions, in a way that transforms the values of the person involved. It is nevertheless possible that an idea could be internalized, and strong feelings generated by it, but that's all. If this happens, the belief remains a personal, not a social, virtue, since it never enters the real world to test itself against adversity.

For a belief to be turned into a conviction more is needed: the force of will. The process by which convictions are formed is exactly opposite that of beliefs. Beliefs are created through the interiorization of ideas; convictions are built upon the externalization, or projection into behavior, of deeply felt beliefs. Convictions make public what was hitherto private, but to arrive at this condition strength of will is needed.

In an early work on modern drama, Lukacs made this observation: "the essence of man. . . only reveals itself through his will and willful actions. . . . Feeling and thought have fleeting and changeable forms. . . . As far as feelings and thoughts are concerned, man tends to be unsure to what extent they are truly his own. The uncertainty evaporates only at the point where these feelings and thoughts are put to the test, that is, when they become elements of volition, giving rise to deeds." Here, in a few words, is virtually everything important that needs to be said about will. It's in what one wills, and therefore carries out in acts, that the truth of the self comes to be known. The thoughts and sentiments that may be entertained by the mind or cherished by the feelings are at bottom impalpable so long as they remain *only* thoughts and sentiments. With convictions forged through will it's a different matter. Because they represent an urge toward demonstration that is implicit (though by no means always unfolded!) in belief, convictions bring the various parts of the self together in a unique way. They concentrate these parts into acts which make manifest the entirety of one's character. Without will there can be no convictions, for convictions are instances of congealed will.

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It's true that today we live at a time when not many people try to convert their ideas into beliefs, still less their beliefs into convictions. More than ever, the forces of modern life seem to conspire to weaken convictions, or the possibility of convictions (though these same forces can be relatively tolerant of ideas and beliefs so long as they don't disturb anyone). The decline of the moral-ethical sphere, the apparent triumph of instrumental rationality, the acceleration of social engineering, the increasing passivity of a culture saturated by media and commercial values, and the seeming drift into privatism all appear to obviate the need for a committed way of living.

Even so, none of these factors taken individually, nor all of them together, add up to an excuse. No doubt there will be dozens of "ideas" presented in this symposium about what the role of the intellectual should be. And there will be some hand-wringing about the difficulty of achieving any of them. I share the view that the picture right now is bleak, but not that this is an age without hope. To go forward at all though, even with the smallest steps, it is essential to face squarely the inward dimensions of a psychology of commitment. We all know how easy it is to talk about what *must* be done — we've been doing it for years — but the point is to find the courage and resolve to *act* on what we say, whatever that happens to be.


## Telos Press Books

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# Notes and Commentaries:

## *TELOS* AT 50

### by John Fekete

On the occasion of its 50th issue, I would like to sketch a provisional portrait of *Telos* as an institution of criticism. To date, *Telos* has published 50 issues over the 14 years of its existence since its founding in 1968, adding up to more than 11,000 pages of articles, notes, reviews, shourt journal reviews, conference reports, interviews, debates, correspondence, and even the odd poem. At present, the journal has a press run of 4,000 copies per issue, including 2,400 mail subscriptions. It has gone through four cover designs, five copyright policies, and 14 variations in its sub-title self-description (including dropping such descriptions altogether). Thirteen of these changes occurred in the first 16 issues, and included: first, identification of the journal as "the official publication of the Graduate Philosophy Association of the State University of New York at Buffalo"; next, a subordination of that designation to *Telos* as "a philosophical journal *definitely outside* the mainstream of American philosophical thought"; then, with its first quarterly issue, No. 7: "an international interdisciplinary quarterly"; followed in No. 10 by "a journal of revolutionary thought"; No. 12, "an international quarterly of revolutionary theory"; No. 13, "an international cultural quarterly"; No. 14, "a quarterly journal of radical theory"; and No. 16, "a quarterly journal of radical social theory." This last stabilized for 15 issues until No. 31, five years ago, when the current designation, "a quarterly journal of radical thought," was introduced.

It is important to draw attention to these elements of change or discontinuity in order to remark on a certain fluidity in this project. For the journal which began as a graduate student publication and rapidly came to model itself on the English *New Left Review*, the Yugoslav *Praxis*, and the French *Les Temps Modernes*,[1] has come to achieve an international standing, readership and network of contributors rivaling its models. In a sense, the relentless restlessness of the journal in its self-critical search for self-definition is a central feature of the very continuity of its *critical* project.

Perhaps we need to go back from *criticism* to a prior question about *writing*. *Why Write?* at all, asked Jean-Paul Sartre in 1947 — a question that has elicited many answers. Reflecting in the early 1970s in the pages of *Telos* on this question and on writing cultural criticism generally, David Gross suggested that ultimately one writes either to signify one's inner world and explore language (the model of the poet) or else to signify the outer world, the world of the other and to affect other people and the world (the model of the social critic).[2] I do not wish to dwell on the distinction except to suggest that it is generally in this latter sense that *Telos* has conceived of its role as a journal of social criticism and has prepared, consequently, to face the problems that arise. It is worth highlighting here the stress on intentionality and intersubjectivity that has been a characteristic concern of *Telos* in its consistent conflict with all forms of objectivist reduction, whether this takes the form of the automatism of the Second

*An earlier version of this paper was presented at a conference on "The Institutions of Criticism," April 30-May 2, 1981, at McGill University in Montreal.

1. See "The First *Telos* International Conference: 'The New Marxism,'" *Telos*, 6 (Fall 1970), p. 295.

2. See David Gross, "On Writing Cultural Criticism," *Telos*, 16 (Summer 1973), pp. 38-42.

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International, the diamat of Stalinism, the Hegelian subject-object unity of Lukacs, the Freudianism of the Frankfurt School, the serialism of Sartre, the mechanical dogmatism of Althusser, or, to change domains, the textualism of the Anglo-American New Critics.

Now, the institutions of criticism are themselves instituted in the social-historical process, from which they emerge as intrinsically *social* objects that stand in relation to similarly emerging *social* subjects.[3] If in Merleau-Ponty "institution" supplies the common relation between subject and object, in Castoriadis, institution is an irreducible social mode of being behind subject and object, both instituting and instituted, and the condition of their very existence — and, *a fortiori*, of the very existence of institutions in the sociological sense of discrete elements linked in distinct relations so as to form a determinate and ordered whole.[4] Indeed, according to Castoriadis' argument, this systemic conception is a derivative of an indispensable but nonetheless partial dimension of institution — the identitarian-ensemblist dimension. It is through institution that the real, unreal, irrational and so on come to be defined for a particular society.

The point here is Castoriadis' contention that the identitarian-ensemblist logic is not exhaustive of either social communication or social activity. There is also that which it cannot say or do, such that it must be complemented by an imaginary dimension and be itself seen as an imaginary creation. The issue here concerns a usurpation by a rationalist logic whose operative schemas identify, separate, substitute, combine, and instrumentalize, in the process drawing an open totality with neither distinct elements nor definite limits into a discrete set of determinate relations, i.e., systems of objects, codes and synchronic patterns, and defining what is real and possible.[5]

Evidently crucial for a radical critical project, then, is to challenge the colonizing identitarian logic, to decolonize the space of institution, to make space for the instituting *novum*. Castoriadis has appeared repeatedly in the pages of *Telos*, with Merleau-Ponty, at the head of a French-influenced tendency, competing with a Habermas-Frankfurt tendency, a Hungarian Marxist tendency, a Hegel-Husserl-Gramsci tendency, and a scattering of others. What all have shared consistently is the intention to theorize, thematize, and assist in instituting an emancipatory otherness in discourse, social relations, and existential experience. In consequence, the *Telos*

3. Foucault's writings on rationality relentlessly emphasize this, not least in his debates with Jacques Derrida. See Michel Foucault, *Folie et deraison: histoire de la folie a l'âge classique* (Paris, 1961). Merleau-Ponty — another strong current running through the *Telos* circuits — stresses (as against the notion of *constitution*) the importance of the notion of *institution* as an elementary mode of being that acts as an interface between subject and object, subject and other, and subject and self, thus allowing — in a way that the notion of *constitution* does not — that the object, the other, and the self should be able to coexist with the subject without being absorbed into the autarchic existence of the autonomous subjective consciousness as *its* objectification, *its* simple negation, or *its* continuous and instantaneous self-creation *ex nihilo*. See Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Themes from The Lectures at the Collège de France 1952-1960,* trans. John O'Neill (Evanston, 1970), pp. 39-40.

4. See Cornelius Castoriadis, *L'Institution imaginaire de la société* (Paris, 1975).

5. In the 1930s, John Crowe Ransom, in his phenomenological moment in such books as *God Without Thunder* and *The World's Body*, railed against the same usurpation which he recognized in the scientific logic of contemporary society. In time, the limits of his one-sided project led to assimilation, and he and the process of rationalization came reciprocally to embrace one another. In this instance, the target of Castoriadis' much fuller theory is the attempt by identitarian-ensemblist logic in our culture to usurp and colonize the entire space of institution. For a summary of Castoriadis' development and main ideas, see Brian Singer, "The Early Castoriadis: Socialism, Barbarism and the Bureaucratic Thread," *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory*, III:3 (Fall 1979) and "The Later Castoriadis: Institution under Interrogation," *CJPST*, IV:1 (Winter 1980).

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intellectual project, in all its variability and pluralism, is characterized by striving to bury the dead, exorcise ghosts, clean the theoretical stables, unseat usurpers, cleanse the doors of perception — i.e., to settle scores with ostensibly emancipatory inherited thought, redeem the critical emancipatory aspects and jettison the rest, keep the channels open, and participate in the preparation of the new.

Just before looking at the contradictory stages of this intellectual process, a brief comment is in order on *Telos* as a sociological institution, if only because the network life of *Telos* has had an impact on its theoretical life. For most of its life, the editorial core of *Telos* has consisted of half a dozen to a dozen geographically dispersed people whose intellectual and political formation essentially dates from the 1960s and bears a historical experience of utopian horizons, anti-bureaucratic revolt, fluidity of social and everyday relations, transforming life-styles. *Telos* has remained the voice of an intellectual (and political) sector of the New Left and has retained, *mutatis mutandis,* that ethos. This editorial core, which has always been a productively working core, is expanded by a fuller grouping of up to 20 more associated editors and by an informal and decentered critical tributary system which assures the pluralism of the journal and supports its work.

This latter consists of five components. First, a series of *Telos* groups, numbering half a dozen to a dozen people each, generally academics, clustered in different cities and countries around journal-related tasks — editing, translating, transcribing, and writing, among other things. Secondly, two reviewing networks, one to review books, anchored in the Boston-Cambridge area, and one to review other critical journals, anchored in the Peterborough area. For the last five years, the journal has been publishing 50 to 100 pages of such reviews per issue. Thirdly, *Telos* circulates an internal newsletter to report on editorial plans, internal debates and polemics, external relations, correspondence, personal matters of general significance, conference announcements, and the like. Fourthly, on the principle that people are always more than what they write, and with the aim of constructing an organic basis for a collection of articles from dispersed people, a sequence of international *Telos* conferences has been successfully organized in a number of cities to deal with such topics as the new Marxism, bureaucratic and technocratic administration, individual autonomy and the family, the culture industry and the public sphere, planning, domination, control and the political context, narcissism, and the crisis of the state and the Left. Fifthly, *Telos* has consistently sought to establish direct contacts with other radical and European journals, with significant intellectual figures, and with important events in such countries, e.g., Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland.

To complete the picture, *Telos* also operates Telos Press Ltd., a small book publishing enterprise with some twelve titles to its credit — books with little commercial appeal but important for intellectual or social history and for contemporary theory. In all these activities, the journal and the press rely mostly on volunteer work; by the same token, *Telos* has sustained itself all this time, almost unique among journals, as an independent, self-financing operation, without sponsors, subsidies, donations, or harassment of its readers for money.

I should highlight two consequences of this aspect of the journal. First, any intellectual history of its theoretical development needs to take account of the pluralism and uneven density of the network, because by no means will everyone entering the *Telos* orbit have pursued the same path. Because the journal operates basically as a work democracy, what it publishes will usually have been engendered in its networks (in the broadest sense) and will bear the marks of family resemblances, but nothing remotely approaching a monolithic orientation. This naturally is both a source of strength and of practical frustrations.

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The second consequence is perhaps even more important, in itself and in its fallout for the contents of the journal. As a result of its forms of association and its supportive tributary systems, *Telos* retains a kind of movement character in a day without a movement. This is a complex paradox that needs some day to be explored in full. For the moment, I would note only its most salutary element: that this kind of movement character helps to keep the critical project of *Telos* relatively honest — restless and self-searching, to be sure, but by the same token, dynamic. The living and lived process of the self-institution of the journal provides that hinge of commonality which tends to remind us that the foundations of criticism are not bound so much to any specific object, or method, or theory as to the institution among ourselves of meanings and values that are variably appropriated but that draw us all nonetheless into the drama of a shared culture. [6]

With this practical experience, which should not be exaggerated but which is also central to the concerns of the journal, I turn to the intellectual transitions in the journal. I want to highlight three moments that are closely aligned with Piccone's own trajectory and should be considered in the light of the qualifications and caveats I raised earlier. At the same time, it would be very misleading to underestimate Piccone's central position in the history of *Telos*.

The first stage of *Telos* history is a stage of critical appropriation and covers perhaps the first seven years, from 1968 to 1975. *Telos* was established in Buffalo as a graduate student journal in philosophy. By the second issue Piccone was in control and announced the intention "to rescue philosophy from. . . triviality and meaninglessness." [7] This issue introduced the basic features that were to become permanent in *Telos*: the presentation of work by major European thinkers almost wholly unknown in the Anglo-American world (in this case Enzo Paci and Karel Kosik); several discussions on phenomenology; materials related to social and political events, including works dealing with reforms in Czechoslovakia and the crisis of official Central European Marxism. The reviews assessed books in four languages. The third issue discussed the student practice of producing inferior, establishment-type journals, proposed to deal "with concrete issues while confronting establishment philosophy" [8] and, framing its ambitions in the light of Husserl's dictum that philosophers are the functionaries of mankind, insisted on the need to develop a critical theory. This issue adds materials on scientific method, the student movement in the United States and in France, discussions of structuralism, Marcuse, and Gramsci, a translation of a Lukacs article on the meaning of responsibility for intellectuals, as well as more on a phenomenological dialectic to "revitalize worldwide radical thought." The fourth issue continues the discussions of science, phenomenology and politics, adds reports on academic conferences as part of *Telos'* regular challenges to academic fashions and bankrupt professional pseudo-intellectualism, prints the first of a number of interviews with Sartre, and Piccone's study of Lukacs' *History and Class Consciousness,* a book now considered seminal though at the time still unavailable in English. The introduction to the issue announces the "policy of undertaking an international dialogue on relevant philosophical and political issues." The basic pattern is thus set.

It is now recognized that *Telos* has been one of the most important vehicles for making continental Marxism available to English-speaking readers. [9] During the first

6. Cf. John O'Neill, introduction to Merleau-Ponty, *Themes from the Lectures, op.cit.,* p. xv.

7. See inside cover, Vol. I, No. 2 (Fall 1968).

8. See Vol. II, No. 1 (Spring 1968), p. 2; cf. also *Telos* Staff, "Graduate Student Journals: Predicaments, Prospects, and Pitfalls," *ibid.,* pp. 132-137.

9. For example, cf. Martin Jay, "Further Considerations on Anderson's *Considerations on Western Marxism,*" *Telos,* 32 (Summer 1977), p. 162.

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portion of this period of reappropriation, *Telos* concentrated on reviewing and reassessing the Hegelian Marxist traditions of Lukacs, Korsch and Gramsci, with excursions into all the associated European debates, the suggested phenomenological corrective, and the anti-Hegelian opposition, e.g., Althusser in France, Della Volpe, Tronti and Bologna in Italy. The appeal of this tradition is the promise inscribed in its own goals: to rethink socialism in the face of growing degradation and cultural disintegration and to theorize and promote a social revolution aimed at spiritual reintegration, cultural rebirth, and the democratic fulfillment of the millenarian emancipatory goal of Western civilization. The motivation comes from the disarray of the New Left, degeneracy of official Soviet Marxism, and consequently a need to re-evaluate the intellectual heritage. Lukacs' theory of reification, Gramsci's of cultural hegemony, and Korsch's of the unity of theory and practice appear to analyze and challenge alienation, and with the addition of a historicized existential-phenomenological grounding via Husserl, and supplemented by the post-Bolshevik, non-dogmatic ethical humanism of the Budapest School followers of Lukacs, seem to provide the outlines of a renewed project of collective subjectivity.

In the second portion of this period, while carrying along this material, the *Telos* emphasis seems to shift to an appropriation of Frankfurt critical theory. This is the period of the Martin Jay-James Schmidt debates on Frankfurt, of the republication of Frankfurt essays, of a general expansion in the cultural scope of the journal, and of a complementary interest in the anti-bureaucratic, anti-rationalist theoretical work of Castoriadis and Lefort from the French "Socialism or Barbarism" group. There is also interest in the range of French alternatives: Mallet, Gorz, Sartre, Goldmann, Foucault, Deleuze, Lyotard, and Baudrillard. But critical theory remains central owing to a felt kinship with its problematic. By this time, the New Left has disappeared. In the mean-spirited Nixon-Ford period, the Frankfurt critical theorists' chosen starting point, the objective impossibility of collective subjectivity, their defense of individuality, and their focus on culture and psychology appear, especially in the shadow of an internalized Marcuse influence, as the most appropriate stage of Hegelian Western Marxism to illuminate the predicament of a social theory attempting to be critical. At this point, the Frankfurt retreat from political dreams not only seems more realistic and sophisticated than the romanticism of the earlier generation, but Adorno's validation of dense, opaque, and obscure theoretical language to protect theory from easy instrumentalization by a totally administered society also appears to provide a political justification for a theory (even *Telos* theory) that may have no immediate practical effect and yet may declare itself *eo ipso* a political practice.

The second stage, from 1976 to 1978, could be called a stage of internal debate about whether to jettison Marxism altogether as unfit for a critical project and also about Piccone's new hypothesis of "artificial negativity." During this period of debate about Western Marxism and administered society, three conferences and a symposium are held and reported in the journal. There are internal and external polemics, a generally rising level of heat, and few resolutions. At a panel on "The Concept of Class in Marxist Theory" reported in issue No. 28 (Spring 1976), it is clear that Piccone now has developed a periodization of Western Marxism that posits it as obsolete and has the artificial negativity thesis in embryo as a follow-up.

Piccone argues that Marxism was the theory of entrepreneurial capitalism where the relation to the means of production and the division of labor as determinants of social being could still translate themselves into social consciousness. He sees the Frankfurt theory of administered society as the theory of *the transition* to monopoly capitalism

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(in the age of fascism, Stalinism, and the New Deal) where social contradictions shift from the economy to politics and culture, to be managed by the culture industry and by state intervention in everyday life, leading to the obliteration of otherness and particularity. In contemporary monopoly capitalism, after the transition, he sees the necessary retention of a minimum of otherness and particularity to provide the system with that negativity without which it cannot regulate itself and further develop. He declares, therefore, that "it is time for radical theory to go beyond traditional critical theory"[10] which is as bankrupt as orthodox Marxism.

*Telos* No. 31 announces, accordingly, that the "exile into European theory may be nearing an end"[11] and promises new efforts at being relevant to American problems. In a section that reprints internal debates, Piccone proposes dumping the Marxist "theoretical albatross" to focus on other radical traditions. On reflection after eight years, he notes that neither Marxism nor critical theory has provided "any meaningful approach to our social reality" and proposes that *Telos* has now exhumed the body of Marxism, performed its theoretical autopsies, found any number of possible causes of death, and has therefore discharged its historical function "to provide Marxism with a decent burial."[12] The suggestion is that *Telos* should study more directly such areas as bureaucracy, social democracy, and world hegemony. It is interesting that the variety of editors' responses to this go to some lengths both to defend the continuing relevance of Marxism — at least as radical philosophy or as the best of a bad lot — and to defend the pluralism of the journal and its critical repertoire from monolithic closure.

At the 1977 Antioch Conference, Piccone's argument is again replayed against the alternate position that Marxism is context-bound and serves as an ideology for modernization in the Third World, as a pseudo-science of legitimation and domination in Eastern Europe, and yet, in a self-critical form, as a critical theory in advanced capitalist countries.[13] By contrast, Piccone now sees the whole of Western Marxism as an unsuccessful attempt to reconstitute Marxism along Hegelian lines and contends that the only way to avoid "the totalitarian cancer nesting within the Marxist dialectic" is by "substituting it with a version of the Hegelian dialectic grounded in Husserlian phenomenology."[14]

Throughout the year, Piccone tries out in conferences and in print his new thesis about the social system: The shift from the New Deal and its aftermath to the current state of affairs requires a major institutional overhaul and a conceptual retooling to understand it. The rationality crisis of over-administered society, to be successfully managed, intrinsically requires reversing the logic of one-dimensionality — which had sought to liquidate specificity and otherness — to the point of even reconstituting character structure and personality in accordance with the needs of rationalization. Now the system needs to develop internal opposition as control mechanism, i.e., counter-weights to the bureaucracy, without which it becomes irrational. Where critiques and oppositions do not develop spontaneously, they tend to be bureaucratically planned, as "artificial negativity" which, in the end, cannot succeed as a regulatory mechanism since it is rationalized within the one-dimensional logic of the bureaucracy. The system needs "organic negativity," i.e., spontaneous critiques and oppositions, and hence will have to, of its own logic, come to create free spaces for

10. "Symposium on Class," *Telos*, 28 (Summer 1976), p. 146.
11. "Introduction," *Telos*, 28 (Spring 1977), p. 4.
12. "Internal Polemics," *ibid.*, pp. 180-181.
13. See Kansas *Telos* Group, "The Antioch *Telos* Conference," *Telos*, 32 (Summer 1977), p. 189.
14. Tim Luke and Paul Piccone, "DeBrizzi's Un-Dimensionality," *Telos*, 37 (Fall 1978), p. 148.

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these to develop. The paradox is that, in the last generation, both the individual and the possibility of emancipated subjectivity have rapidly declined. So, it seems, there may now be space for criticism, but either critics have nothing to say or there is no one to listen. In fact, curiously, capitalism may have to reconstitute both individuality and community to assist its dynamic development, with the result that rationalization and the possibilities of emancipation may coincide (if the organic critical opposition can resist being totally instrumentalized).[15]

I will come back to this dilemma for a critical isntitution — its inevitable integration, within which may reside the possibilities of effective criticism. The thesis, of course, is still preliminary and in need of elaboration, and there is a lot of opposition to it within *Telos*, as elsewhere, partly because its application has been erratic in probing the explanatory power of the theory and at times misdirected. Consequently, Piccone's optimism in pointing to the collapse of the New Deal and to the incipient reconstitution of the public sphere has not come into clear focus. In the third stage, over the last two years, Piccone has explored the thesis in different contexts of discussion, for example, the "Narcissism" and the "Crisis of the Left" conferences.[16] At the same time, the journal has drifted to more direct social analysis, a lot of it on Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, and the rest on unemployment, Eurocommunism, and various types of political problems. The emigre Budapest School group has made particularly strong contributions to this, as have some other European analysts. But it is unclear whether *Telos* can sustain this kind of orientation since its intellectual affinities are evidently of Marxist inspiration, and partly they coexist uneasily with Picconean anti-Marxism, and partly the failures of East European reform efforts can only so often be reviewed. The journal in its current period carries the unresolved problems of its second stage debates and though the heat is gone, light has not arrived.

It is worth noting, in this context of potentially explosive internal tensions, that the very success of the journal in becoming an international forum of dialogue while sustaining some kind of movement character has revealed new vulnerabilities, in a sort of double bind. On one hand, in terms of *Telos'* own thesis, while the progressive rationalizing sectors of American society may be ready to make space for artificial or even organic negativity, the more backward, traditional sectors are not. In this context, the editor of the journal has been fired from his professorial job for his critical work with some kind of a movement character, and the journal has been to some extent destabilized, though it has held on and resisted takeover bids. One notes in passing that a series of critical and quasi-critical institutions, i.e., journals and universities, may be sharply stratified and in conflict with one another in their disposition of social power. On the other hand, new spaces for criticism, the professionalization of critical discourse, and the new academic respectability of Marxism have also brought new respect for *Telos* in other quarters and new attention to it as an established forum of international dialogue. Along with this come

15. For discussions of this thesis, see in particular Paul Piccone, "The Crisis of One-Dimensionality," *Telos*, 35 (Spring 1978), pp. 43-54; Tim Luke, "Culture and Politics in the Age of Artificial Negativity," *ibid.*, pp. 55-72; St. Louis *Telos* Group, "The Totally Administered Society: Conference Report," *ibid.*, pp. 169-184; "DeBrizzi's Un-Dimensinoality," *op.cit.*, pp. 148-152.

16. See Piccone, "Narcissism after the Fall: What's on the Bottom of the Pool?" *Telos*, 44 (Summer 1980), pp. 112-121; cf. John Alt and Frank Hearn, "The Cortland Conference on Narcissism," *ibid.*, pp. 49-58, esp. pp. 55-57. See Piccone, "Why Did the Left Collapse?" *Telos*, 46 (Winter 1980-81), pp. 92-97; cf. Kansas *Telos* Group, "The Kansas *Telos* Conference: The Crisis of the Left," *ibid.*, pp. 81-88.

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expectations of a new "respectability" which may equally destabilize the journal and its unregimented critical character.

One such example is illuminating about relations between parallel critical institutions, and worth reporting. *Telos* has been interested in Sartre since the earliest issues, and has run interviews with him in three issues (Nos. 4, 9, and 16) and materials on him in another three issues (Nos. 13, 16, 25), including his correspondence with the Czech philosopher, Karel Kosik. When Sartre died in 1980, in the Summer issue (No. 44), *Telos* carried a special tribute to Sartre of some 19 pieces totaling about 70 pages. Included was a *Telos* translation from *Le Nouvel Observateur* of Sartre's last interview. In October, Irving Howe, editor of *Dissent*, wrote to *Telos* to indicate that *Dissent* had the exclusive rights to this piece, that the *Telos* action was "irresponsible, immoral and illegal," and that *Dissent* would take legal action. "We are determined," Howe writes, "to put a stop once and for all to this kind of literary piracy." Piccone, in reply, explains the circumstances, the history, the fact that *Telos* published its own translation before *Dissent* even announced its version, and that, "usually we contact the authors when we translate their work; in Sartre's case, however, he was already dead." In late October, Howe replies, in an open letter to the editors of *Telos, The New Republic, The Nation, Partisan Review, Democratic Left, Socialist Review, In These Times,* and *The New York Review of Books*, and he indicates that his letter will appear in the next issue of *Dissent*. He notes that "at least in part [*Telos*] survives through the pirating of articles from European journals" and reports that "Sartre, on his deathbed, approved [sale of the interview] to *Dissent* over competitors; a fee was agreed upon and paid."

I want to highlight a section of Piccone's reply: "It is ironic that *Telos* should run into hot water with *Dissent* over Sartre. I don't think I ever told you this but *Telos* began in 1967, among other things, as a result of the way American left journals treated European intellectuals and theories — mostly by ignoring them. I remember having a long discussion outside the Union in SUNY at Buffalo on a cold day during the winter of 1967 with Lionel Abel over his review of Sartre's *Critique* which *Dissent* had published a couple of years earlier. It was a disappointment with his dismissal of Sartre's work as 'a failure' and his advice to turn elsewhere for theoretical guidance that led a bunch of graduate students from the Philosophy, the English and the Sociology departments to organize our own seminar on Sartre and, shortly thereafter, to found *Telos* with the specific intent to deal with what at that time we felt established left intellectuals, whom we otherwise respected greatly, were unwittingly repressing. Now, after Sartre seems to have become a marketable intellectual commodity, we are accused of piracy for developing precisely what you have pretty well ignored or dismissed for at least 15 years. . . .

"Needless to say, we are delighted to see that finally *Dissent* has apparently seen the light and begun to pay a little more attention to European intellectual life. We will gladly let you reclaim an intellectual field which we felt you had been dealing with very unsatisfactorily, but we are not going to take any nonsense about us surviving 'through the pirating of articles from European journals.'. . . . Your announcement of the appearance of that interview in your fall issue came after the interview had already been included in our summer issue. This does not sound like piracy to me, but only poor timing on your part and failure by us to realize that *Dissent* was finally undergoing a phase of re-Europeanization.

"As you probably know, *Telos* never considered ideas as commodities and we did not bother to copyright our first two issues. When the matter was brought to our attention in the third issue, we substituted for the copyright line the following motto:

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'Since ideas should neither be sold nor bought, none of the included material is copyrighted and can be used for any purpose by anyone.' Only with issue No. 7, after another publication wanted to reprint some material from *Telos* and indicated uneasiness with our copyright policy, did we change the motto, during one of our surrealist moments, to read: 'Since ideas should be neither sold nor bought, all of the included material is copyrighted.' The point, not immediately obvious, was to ridicule the predominant practice to commodify ideas by having a self-contradictory copyright policy. Only with issue No. 25, in connection with some idiotic second-class mailing regulation, were we forced to copyright properly. Moral of the story: we have always placed the divulging of important ideas ahead of commercial considerations — which explains our policy not to bother too much with these bureaucratic details.

"Of course, you are free to talk to your attorney and further thin your already scarce resources to attack another left journal of even more precarious means, but it does not appear to be a stroke of political genius. We barely manage to survive — as you very well know, since I described to you in detail the way we operate over a year and a half ago.... With a law suit, not only will you manage to look silly, but after a couple of years of litigation, all you would be able to claim — if you succeed — would be the sinking of our imaginary pirate ship and probably be awarded as a damage our debts as well as a bunch of back issues presently collecting dust in my garage.

"Consequently, my suggestion would be to forget about this incident and concentrate on publishing more interesting European theory — in doing which you can, as you very well know, always count on our help.

"Regards,

"Paul Piccone, Alleged Pirate-In-Chief."[17]

On reflection, one may appreciate why Woody Allen, in the movie *Annie Hall,* invents a story of how *Dissent* and *Commentary* merge into one journal with the name *Dysentery*. Irving Howe says "the rights of authors and magazines must be protected." What *are* the rights of authors and magazines, especially those with critical aims? Are there rights to do with cultural appropriateness and intellectual affinity, or are there only property rights? Suppose we regard commodity competition in the realm of ideas as a key mechanism of the colonization of cultural spaces, and suppose we favor the deinstitutionalization of cultural spaces in order to make the reciprocal exchange of significations freer and to make space for the instituting creativity of the radical imagination. How do we then, on behalf of the institution of criticism, assign a value valency to piracy as a challenge to the instituted relations of circulation?

Indeed, the problem for a critical journal such as *Telos*, whose main consistency has been its searching and at times self-lacerating commitment to its critical purpose, is severe. Its place on the institutional map is never secure and always subject to dislocation or even extinction. At the same time, its own trajectory may have generally exhausted, at the level of content, the main inherited traditions of critical thought, that is, of instituted criticism. It needs to survive, more than ever, as a self-instituting project. Yet its own thematizations of the global situation indicate a further institutional dilemma that leaves in uncertainty the form and the mode of existence of the institution of criticism.

If the institution of criticism is in mid-process of being re-instituted by the object of its criticism with the status of a critical-instituting project that must resist total instrumentalization, not only in order to retain its emancipatory dimensions, but also in order to serve the very needs of rational system development, then it must simultaneously depend for its conditions of existence on the same identitarian-

17. See *Telos Newsletter*, St. Louis, Nov. 6, [illegible]

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ensemblist logic that it needs to challenge. If this is not problematic, it is at best a very ambivalent position. Criticism is inscribed in a cultural space with more or less prescribed boundaries of transcendence, and it must sustain these conditions of its practical operation at least as vectors, even while finding practical ways to subvert, transcend or rupture the prescribed limits of transcendence in order to be registered as criticism at all.

To rephrase this more broadly and with more precise implications for other critical institutions would require more fully differentiated concepts and a more satisfactory elucidation of the codes and conventions of criticism (and of their points of vulnerability) of a kind that we do not seem currently to have at our disposal. We may be looking for a new grammar, rhetoric and logic with which communities of interlocutors may understand and redefine the dynamic relations between the order of criticism and the social-historical and imaginary process which is co-extensive and co-temporaneous with it but also stretches beyond its limits. Every discourse risks reduction to a ritualistic position within a continuous monologue circulating inside the bounds of prevailing rationality. Equally, every discursive act may come to pose a challenge to the social relations instituted in the monological circulation and consumption of signification, redefine what is speakable and possible, and reintroduce distances between what is and what might be.

What seem central to this account are the social relations of communication and the notion that meaning is not simply a matter of the contents of significations but also of their social articulation. All of our best critical paradigms have great difficulty in finding points of leverage on the Moebius strip of the contemporary information environment. The social relations that encourage the proliferation of discursive contents also strip them of authority by providing for their insertion in indeterminate conditions of reception. The social relations that thus democratize or open the conditions of reception to polyvalence also tendentially strip away the possibilities of autonomous response or reciprocal mutuality — both communicatively and psychoanalytically — in monologic feedback loops where questions and answers presuppose one another in cybernetic homeostasis.

In such a context, *Telos* is bound to experience the paradoxes of instituting its efforts as acts of freedom, if only because the cutting edge of its emancipatory *telos* can remain sharpened only if *Telos* continues to wrestle with new modes of articulation. In this general perplexity, which characterizes not the journal alone but its cultural context as well, *Telos* is fortunately not without real resources, of which I would highlight three. First, as regards content, *Telos*' self-refining distillation of the best of the radical political and philosophical traditions can continue to provide a forceful moral and educational frame of legitimacy for its critical voice, especially in a world situation where the prospects of direct political achievement seem to recede toward a vanishing point at the edges of unprecedented incipient global madness. At the same time, the range of cultural probes in the pages of the journal, in its journal summaries, book reviews, notes and articles, in and around the density of its more conventional central argumentation, has since the beginning been a crucial life support system of *Telos*' intellectual operations and audience relations, and remains a major reservoir of meaning and direction that can be reproportioned for fuller analytic engagement with the cellular structure of modern cultural life.

Second, as regards the form of discourse, *Telos'* great enduring contribution to the anti-foundationalist temper of contemporary inquiry has been its radical self-presentation, that is, its commitment to a cultural space defined by *debate over principle*. If *Telos* can remain wide open as to content and avoid the temptations of

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overvaluing either established or fashionable standpoints because of the easy temporary and local advantages they may offer from time to time, then, between the Scylla and Charybdis of dogmatism and skepticism, whose magnetic forces account for so many of the twists and turns of current intellectual polarities, this commitment to a debate over principle may serve as an indispensable navigating guide to a radical ecumenicism that is not syncretic, a radical doubt that does not make of doubt itself an absolute, and a radical reinstitution of authority that refuses to be authoritarian.

Third, as regards the social relations of discourse, the multi-centered sociology of the *Telos* operation may have the potential to be upgraded in its movement character to the point where the journal becomes — both internally, within its production structure, and also externally, within its broader communicative field — the site for authentic responses and reciprocal exchanges of meanings by effective counter-communities of people engaged in a much differentiated but shared international critical-utopian project. On this account, such a site would be provisionally liberated intellectual territory, whose scope as an affinite network and whose imbrication with compatible networks at parallel or alternate levels of cultural and social articulation may become very substantial, though impossible here to anticipate. *Telos*' destiny is not written in the skies, as the saying goes, but in its texts and in the processes of the production, circulation and consumption of these texts and of the relations that traverse the existence of these texts. In general, if it is fair to say on the occasion of *Telos*' 50th issue that it has made a considerable contribution, it is equally fair to regard its future, like that of its milieu, as troubled, promising, uncertain — that is, as open to a pessimism of the intellect, to be sure, but even more urgently to an optimism of the will, and not least to a living affective drama built collectively around the emancipatory *telos* at its heart.

# FRANZ NEUMANN*

## by Alfons Söllner

Franz Neumann would have been 80 years old on May 23, 1980. It is no accident that this German-American lawyer and political scientist, killed in an auto wreck in 1954, has only very recently been receiving the attention his work deserves.[1] A staunch opponent of National Socialism from the very beginning, he personally tackled the question of guilt in an almost self-tormenting manner. "Why do I love this country so much and yet also despise it?" he wrote in a 1954 letter to Helge Pross, and he answered: "Perhaps it is a deep-seated guilt feeling. How often after 1933 have I pondered the question of what my responsibility for National Socialism really was. For I believe in collective guilt. But then I cannot exclude myself from it.... We opponents of reaction were all too cowardly. We were all compromised. I saw with my own eyes how deceitful the German Social Democratic Party was in the months from

*Originally published in *Kritische Justiz*, 4 (1980), pp. 427-437. Translated by David J. Parent.

1. Franz Neumann, *Behemoth. Struktur und Praxis des Nationalsozialismus 1933-1944* (Frankfurt, 1977); *Wirtschaft. Staat. Demokratie. Aufsätze 1930-1954* (Frankfurt, 1978); *Die Herrschaft des Gesetzes* (Frankfurt, 1980). Previously only *Demkoratischer und autoritärer Staat* (Frankfurt, 1967) had appeared.

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July 1932 to May 1933 (and not only then) and I said nothing. I saw how cowardly the union bosses were — and I continued serving them. I saw how two-faced the intellectuals were — and I remained silent. Of course, I can justify this rationally in terms of the United Front against National Socialism, but actually fear of isolation was a factor.... So I collaborated in selling-out the ideas of the so-called German Left. Certainly, my contribution was slight and a politician will judge my behavior ironically. But can the decline of the German Social Democratic Party and the rise of National Socialism be seen just as a political problem? Didn't moral decisions have to be made? I made them too late and still not radically enough." [2] A lack of future perspectives is also the result of a short memory. Precisely from the standpoint of the future, we need not only criticism that alters consciousness, but criticism that redeems as well — we need to remember.[3]

*Labor Law and Economic Democracy — The Practicing Jurist (1918-1933)*

Neumann was the son of a Jewish merchant from Katowice. He studied law in Breslau, Rostock and Frankfurt from 1918 on. Contact with the council movement in Leipzig, where he took part in the struggles of revolutionary workers and soldiers, turned his interests very early to the historical conflict between capital and labor. In the struggle between Social Democratic and Communist strategies that were decisive for the early Weimar Republic, he sided with the reformists. This identifies the historical and political conditions that led him to focus on labor law and economic democracy as his primary interests. His dissertation,[4] written in 1923 under the neo-Kantian Max Ernst Mayer, sought to bridge the gap between the is and the ought in terms of legal sociology. Neumann's character was shaped in the years between 1923 and 1927, when, besides training as a junior lawyer and teaching at the Frankfurt Labor Academy, he worked as a personal assistant to Hugo Sinzheimer. Through the person of this spiritual father of Weimar labor law he became acquainted with the precarious position of the Jewish-Socialist intelligentsia in Weimar academic life even before National Socialist terror became widespread. Neumann reports that in the early 1920s he had to help defend the recently appointed professor of labor law against anti-Semitic attacks by Nationalist students.[5]

After 1928 Neumann went into private practice in Berlin, where he shared a law office with Ernst Fraenkel (also a pupil of Sinzheimer). His productivity in this field is documented by an abundance of works on legal theory.[6] He wrote about technical legal problems, but from within the perspective of a comprehensive political strategy focusing on unions and the state. This strategy was reformist insofar as it believed that socialism could be developed by the immanent transformations of capitalism through legal and political means. Although less skeptical than Otto Kahn-Freund,[7] Neumann had no doubts that the juridical decisions of the national labor court, influenced by the ideals of communitarian workplace organization [*Betriebsgemeinschaften*] would,

2. Cf. my "Skizzen zu einer politischen und intellektuellen Biographie," in Neumann, *Wirtschaft...*, *op.cit.*, p. 12.

3. Cf. Jürgen Habermas, "Bewusstmachende oder rettende Kritik" in his *Kultur und Kritik* (Frankfurt, 1973), pp. 302ff.

4. *Rechtsphilosophische Einleitung zu einer Abhandlung über Staat und Strafe* (typescript manuscript, 1923).

5. "Intellektuelle Emigration und Sozialwissenschaft," In Neumann, *Wirtschaft, op.cit.*, p. 413.

6. Cf. Wolfgang Luthardt's bibliography in Neumann, *Wirtschaft, op.cit.*, pp. 462-464.

7. "Das soziale Ideal des Reichsarbeitsgerichts" (1931) in Thilo Ramm, ed., *Arbeitsrecht und Politik* (Neuwied, 1966), pp. 149ff.

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once institutionalized, be far from meeting the workers' original expectations. Here he saw the ambivalence of legalizing class struggles, i.e., of delegating the resolution of conflicts to judges who were anything but pro-socialist.[8] Along with a respect for formal-legal rationality, his intensive concern for the newly passed labor laws instilled in Neumann an awareness of its possible misuse within monopoly capitalism, which seemed all the more likely through the weakening of the parliamentary legislature. Neumann diagnosed the vociferous demands of the free-law movement and the attempts to establish a supreme court to review the constitutionality of laws as promoters of the decline of formal-legal rationality.[9] He recognized very clearly the political and social meaning contained in such changes of legal theory and practice: the release of the socially reactionary judges from the control of laws that sought to develop legal equality into social equality, and thus the suspension of the primacy of the legislature over the judiciary, unquestionable for a state based on the rule of law.

Already in the Weimar Republic, not only Neumann's practice but his theory as well is clearly informed by extrajuridical, political and sociological ideas. Here he follows the example of Sinzheimer and the Austro-Marxist Karl Renner.[10] Nonetheless, even after the worldwide economic crisis and unlike Otto Kirchheimer in his sociological studies of constitutionalism,[11] Neumann still did not recognize the systematic nature of the erosion of the Weimar state and juridical apparatus that had occurred since Brüning's resumption of office. This is evident from the fact that from 1929, Neumann concentrated on questions of economic democracy instead of the crisis – i.e., at a point when the social and political foundations of the 1928 trade union program had been already destroyed. And it is also evident from the way Neumann does this: his works on economic democracy insist on the constitutional and legal dogmas of a democratization of the economy, in which the unions on a par with the entrepreneurs are to play a decisive organizational role.[12]

This specific historical situation, about which we know more today, can be observed in Neumann's writings on constitutional theory between 1930 and 1933. Like most of his contemporaries, Neumann did not recognize that already under the Brüning government, a workers' movement that submitted itself to the legality of a constitution already eroded by unconstitutional measures was condemned to failure. For even Brüning, whom the Social Democrats believed to be a buttress against Hitler, consciously rendered the Weimar *Reichs*-constitution ineffective, even if he did not change it.

A paradox emerges: compared to the demands for the rematerialization of formal-legal rationality, which Carl Schmitt and his anti-democratic supporters advocated, the jurists of the workers' movement proved to be traditional – legal positivists. They took the formalism of the bourgeois constitutional system more seriously than its

8. "Die politische und soziale Bedeutung der arbeitsgerichtlichen Rechtsprechung" (1929) in Ramm, *op.cit.*, pp. 133ff.

9. "Richterliches Ermessen und Methodenstreit im Arbeitsrecht," in *Arbeitsrecht* (1929), column 321ff.; "Gegen ein Gesetz zur Nachprüfung der Verfassungsmässigkeit von Reichsgesetzen," in *Die Gesellschaft* (1929), pp. 517ff.

10. Hugo Sinzheimer, *Grundzüge des Arbeitsrechts*, second edition (Jena, 1927); Karl Renner, *Die Rechtsinstitute des Privatrechts und ihre soziale Funktion*, second edition (Tübingen, 1929).

11. E.g., "Weimar – und was dann?" (1930) in Kirchheimer, *Politik und Verfassung* (Frankfurt, 1964), pp. 9ff.

12. "Die soziale Bedeutung der Grundrechte in der Weimarer Verfassung" (1930) in Neumann, *Wirtschaft, op.cit.*, pp. 57ff; *ibid.*, *Koalitionsfreiheit und Reichsverfassung* (Berlin, 1932).

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bourgeois reformers.[13] In politics they also proved to be legalistic, in the sense not only of fidelity to written law, but of an excessive reliance on the inviolability of a constitutional system that in the period of economic crisis no longer had any real guarantees behind it.[14] In this regard Neumann and his colleagues shared the general fate of reformism at the end of the Weimar Republic. As Neumann self-critically noted shortly afterwards, this fate was "as much inevitable as our own doing."[15]

*From Liberalism to Fascism — The Legal Theorist (1933-1942)*

As late as 1932, Neumann had been appointed legal representative of the Social Democratic Party, and in this function he fought against restrictions on freedom of the press.[16] After the occupation of union buildings by the SA, he had to escape from Germany at the beginning of May 1933. The first stop of his emigration route was London, where through the efforts of Harold Laski, he received a scholarship to the London School of Economics. Neumann's attention at first still focused on German developments: meaning following Nazi policy, self-critique of reformism, and support of internal resistance.[17] But he soon turned to the genuine options that were still available to him in the emigration. After realizing the uselessness of continental European jurisprudence for English case law, he turned to theoretical work and research.

It is symptomatic for the history of German jurisprudence after 1933 that its critical future development had to take place outside the country and that this course led out of juristic immanence to a political and sociological thematization of the law. The London School of Economics, where an interdisciplinary and comparative approach was dominant, proved to be an ideal place to speed up this process. Here, under the guidance of Laski and Mannheim, Neumann was transformed from a jurist to a political and social scientist, without, however, losing sight of the law. Instead, the law became the nucleus around which he attempted to synthesize the significant developments of more recent history. *The Governance of the Rule of Law,* written in 1936 and translated into German just recently, testifies to this.[18] As Neumann himself points out,[19] it is the theoretical extrapolation of the Weimar experience into the legal history of bourgeois society from liberalism to fascism. Mediated through Karl Renner's exemplary study and Karl Mannheim's sociology of knowledge, Neumann places himself under the aegis of two theorists whose work, although already ranked among the classics of social science, had hardly found application to the most recent development of law: Karl Marx and Max Weber. He takes from them the distrust of methodically isolating legal concepts from legal practices and the search for structural social contexts in light of which both the theory and practice of law must be understood. This historically and theoretically ambitious approach is Neumann's contribution to legal theory.[20]

13. Ingeborg Maus, *Bürgerliche Rechtstheorie und Faschismus* (Munich, 1976).

14. Wolfgang Luthardt, "Sozialdemokratie und Legalstrategie," in *Geschichte als politische Wissenschaft* (Stuttgart, 1979), pp. 142ff.

15. "Der Niedergang der deutschen Demokratie" (1933) in Neuman, *Wirtschaft, op.cit.,* p. 104.

16. *Die öffentlichrechtlichen und privatrechtlichen Beschränkungen der Pressefreiheit* (Berlin, 1932).

17. E.g., "The State and Labour in Germany," in *The Contemporary Review* (1934), pp. 713ff. "Rechtstaat, Gewaltenteilung und Sozialismus" (1934) and "Die Gewerkschaften in Demkoratie und Diktatur" (1935) both in Neumann, *Wirtschaft, op.cit.,* pp. 124ff and 145ff.

18. *Die Herrschaft des Gesetzes.*

19. *Ibid.,* p. 19.

20. Cf. my "Wissenschaftsgeschichtliches und wissenschaftspolitisches Nachwort," *ibid.,* pp. 357ff.

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The type of legal science that Neumann worked out in the 1930s can be characterized in terms of the relation he established between legal doctrine, the philosophy, and the sociology of law. In opposition to Hans Kelsen's theory of law and to the materialization of law in Carl Schmitt's ontologized theory of sovereignty, Neumann arrives at a standpoint that gives normative jurisprudence its due while assigning to the sociology of law an even more comprehensive task than the philosophy of law.[21] The systematic center of this approach is twofold: Weber's sociological theory of state sovereignty, and a juristically formulated but historically and sociologically informed typology of basic rights. This twofold methodology, in which Neumann's neo-Kantianism reappears, is applied first to the history of ideas and to theories of bourgeois constitutional government. This development is reconstructed in light of the contradiction between basic rights as freedom and state sovereignty, and Neumann sees its consequence to be the thorough-going positivization of natural law.[22] Second, Neumann constructs an ideal type of the bourgeois legislative state, whose purest historical realization is seen in the classical parliamentarianism of English liberalism. The juristic and sociological elaboration of this ideal type utilizes a functionalist and a systematic perspective. From a systematic viewpoint, in bourgeois society a system of law develops whose precarious semi-autonomous character is anchored in the status of basic rights and in the dominant qualities of the law (generality, determinateness, non-retroactivity, the binding force of the law on the judges). The functional significance of this system of law is threefold: economically, it makes economic processes calculable; politically, it simultaneously secures and conceals the hegemony of the bourgeoisie; culturally, it guarantees the individual a minimum of legal security and justice. This ideal type played a double role in the historical investigations Neumann carried on in the 1930s; it was a point of reference both for research technique and normatively, the theoretical and ideal expression of a rationality, both inherent in and made impossible by competitive bourgeois society. In Neumann's analysis, the German state of the rule of law [*Reichsstaat*] and English parliamentarianism were presented as two variants of this rationality.[23]

The development Neumann underwent during his London exile from a reformist practitioner of the law to a materialist theorist of the law is significant not for legal theory alone. This development indicates how jurisprudence could become the center of a theory of bourgeois reason. This was also the theoretical reason that made it possible for Neumann to become a co-worker of Max Horkheimer's Institute for Social Research in 1937.[24] In the work of the institute, Marxist theory formation attained its most advanced state, characterized by a program of social research differentiated according to disciplines and with interdisciplinary feedback.[25] Along with Otto Kirchheimer, Neumann was responsible for research on the law and the state.[26] Their articles in the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* show far better than more recent abstract Marxist derivations of state and law that an acceptable materialist science of the law can only be developed in close contact with the scattered material of legal history.

21. *Ibid.*, Part I, pp. 27ff.
22. *Ibid.*, Part II, pp. 77ff.
23. *Ibid.*, Part III, pp. 199ff.
24. Neumann made his debut in the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* in 1937 with the essay "Der Funktionswandel des Gesetzes im Recht der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft," in Neumann, *Demokratischer und autoritärer Staat*, pp. 28ff.
25. Helmut Dubiel, *Wissenschaftsorganisation und politische Erfahrung* (Frankfurt, 1978), pp. 135ff.
26. Cf. my *Geschichte und Herrschaft* (Frankfurt, 1979), pp. 86ff.

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Neumann organized these materials from German, English and French legal history into an analytical framework encompassing liberalism, mass democracy and fascism. His thesis was that under the pressure of a developing economic and political monopoly, the formal rationality of law is transformed, rematerialized and ultimately destroyed. He named statutory jurisprudence, the free law movement, emergency measures [*Massnahmegesetzgebung*] and the revival of natural law to be among some indicators of this process.[27]

Neumann's main efforts between 1937 and 1942 no longer concerned problems in theory and study of law in the strict sense, but German National Socialism as a whole. *Behemoth*, first published in 1942, which soon brought him international fame, is a comprehensive analysis of the political, economic, social and ideological structure of Hitler's Germany. This work is one of the few theoretically and empirically comprehensive studies of a modern social order. Here we can only mention that first a paradigm shift occurs in it from a legal to a sociological analysis of domination, second, Neumann claims that in the economy of national socialism elements of monopoly capitalism predominate over those of planned capitalism, which implies a particular reformation of the Marxian critique of political economy, and third, he presents this social structure as the formation of anarchically competing ruling elites. Recent detailed historical analysis continues to document the adequacy of Neumann's approach.[28] Concerning the development of law, in *Behemoth* Neumann came to the finding that National Socialism revealed with utmost consistency what the historical logic of the Weimar crisis had been leading to: the destruction of democratic achievements and the reintegration of the working class into imperialist capitalism. Accordingly, he saw the most grievous legal changes to have occurred in the fields of labor law, political penal law and democratic and individual rights. This amounted to the replacement of legal rationality by a terror, which sought to hide itself behind a populist ideology of natural law. By comparison, civil law, which was a class law after all, seemed like an idyllically remote image of a legally informed rationality.[29]

*Democracy and Freedom — The Political Scientist (1942-1954)*

In 1942 Franz Neumann left the Institute for Social Research and, together with Kirchheimer, Herbert Marcuse and Arcadius Gurland, entered the service of the U.S. State Department. Since National Socialism did not seem defeatable from within, the possibility of an effective anti-fascist struggle was offered by the alliance with the only power still undamaged by Nazism. In the Office of Strategic Services, where he worked from 1945 on as director of the German department of the Research and Analysis Branch, Neumann produced compensious studies on various problems such as war crimes and de-Nazification, the function of the military government and the nature of the future German state, and the social power relations after the war.[30] Neumann's development in this creative period is influenced by his activities as a practical policy advisor. Once again, his biography reveals more the byways than the highways of German history. Both the transformation of a legal theorist into a political scientist and the political reference point for this are untypical.

27. *Die Herrschaft des Gesetzes, op.cit.*, pp. 314ff.

28. Gert Schäfer, "Franz Neumanns Behemoth und die heutige Faschismusdiskussion," in *Behemoth, op.cit.*, pp. 663ff; Helmut Dubiel, Alfons Söllner, "Die Nationalsozialismus-Forschung des Instituts für Sozialforschung," in Horkheimer, Pollach, Neumann, Kirchheimer, Gurland, Marcuse, *Wirtschaft, Recht und Staat im Nationalsozialismus. Analysen des Instituts für Sozialforschung (1929-1942)* (Frankfurt, 1981), pp. 7-31.

29. *Behemoth*, pp. 68ff., 307ff, 378ff, 509ff.

30. These articles appeared in 1981 in EVA under the title *Demokratischer Wiederaufbau Deutschlands aus der Emigration.*

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All of Neumann's works published after 1947 focus on the reconstruction of a stable democracy in Germany.[31] It is characteristic of his analyses of Germany that they rightly differ from the moralism of the "zero hour." As much as Neumann stressed the roots of National Socialism in national psychology, he never forgot the structural, i.e., the economic, social and political causes for the rise of the German evil. And in view of internal German and international constellations, these were well on the road to survival. Neumann held the thesis, unpopular among Americans, that democracy in Germany had scarcely a chance[32] without a radical transformation of the monopoly-capitalist economy and the dismissal of reactionary officials and judges. These were steps that went well beyond demilitarization and a de-Nazification soon to become obsolete. Resuming his past role as a critic of justice, he warned especially against the "fetishism of the constitution" among the fathers of the constitution.[33] Besides the general illusion of the legalization of conflict situations to which Weimar reformism had also succumbed, he understood by this the neo-liberalism which was experiencing a resurgence in America and Germany in reaction to fascism. When the new German constitution reacted to the Weimar experiences by strengthening liberal rights while abridging basic social rights, by stressing federalism, by strengthening the position of the chancellor and of the government, and by introducing the constitutional court, this suggested that the weaknesses of Weimar democracy had been produced by too much social democracy, excessive parliamentary sovereignty, centralism and the excessive politicization of the citizens. In Neumann's eyes, this was nothing but a distortion of the Weimar crisis.[34]

The political imperatives — which Neumann, for the most part in vain, addressed for the American occupation policy — have their theoretical corollary in his scientific works after 1950.[35] Neumann had been appointed visiting professor at Cornell University in 1948 and in 1950 he became professor of public law and government there. He wrote a number of political treatises in this function, centering on the problem of democracy, its conditions and possibilities in advanced capitalist society. He taught with considerable success at Columbia University and had considerable influence on the establishment of political sciences in Germany, especially at the Free University of Berlin.[36] The themes Neumann concentrated on were mainly grouped in two fields: on the one hand, power, domination and the political system; on the other, political philosophy, its history and present significance. The form in which Neumann related political analysis of real processes to political philosophy envisaged a political science that succumbed neither to the positivism of American political science nor to the neo-normativism of totalitarianism theory. His aim was to conceive a "real theory of politics" within the framework of a carefully reformulated social theory of late capitalism.

The implications of this position for jurisprudence are concretely presented in the long treatise, *On the Concept of Political Freedom*.[37] The dimension of juristic freedom, which is treated extensively, is assigned an indispensable though only

31. Cf. my introduction to Neumann, *Wirtschaft, op.cit.*, pp. 27ff.
32. "Militärregierung und Wiederbelebung der Demokratie in Deutschland" (1950), *ibid.*, pp. 309ff.
33. "Deutsche Demokratie" (1950), *ibid.*, pp. 331.
34. Cf. Joachim Perels, *Kapitalismus und politische Demokratie* (Frankfurt, 1973).
35. They are collected in *Demokratischer und autoritärer Staat*.
36. Cf. especially "Die Wissenschaft der Politik in der Demokratie" (1950), in Neumann, *Wirtschaft, op.cit.*, pp. 373ff.
37. "Zum Begriff der politischen Freiheit" (1953) in *Demokratischer und autoritärer Staat*, p. 102.

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negative role in modern society, while the accent is placed more on the cognitive element and even more on the element of the will intrinsic to freedom. The active and creative perception of freedom first makes democracy capable of survival: its increasing hindrance through the alienation of citizens from politics, through the transformation of culture into propaganda, through the restrictive treatment of the basic rights of political opponents create dangers that make a real democracy increasingly difficult to realize. Neumann saw these dangers to grow perilously not only in totalitarian societies, but in Western societies as well. This was tangible, for instance, in the loyalty program of the McCarthy era. It is significant from a theoretical standpoint that even in his late essays and despite a shift of interests, Neumann remained faithful to the social-theoretical intentions of the materialist phase — they are, however, formulated more cautiously and do not go beyond a programmatic stage. What one will not find in his work are the typical abstractions of pluralist theory detached from the structure of society and soon adopted by political science of the 1950s and 1960s as the official legitimation science of the West German state.[38] It is rather interesting that in his last published work, Neumann adopted social-psychological methods in order to point out the dangerous connections of anxiety and politics which he saw to be threateningly effective in both East and West.[39] This may have been a sign of a development that would have made the political scientist into a social psychologist — a step that Neumann's untimely death did not allow.

*On the Actuality of Franz Neumann*

The theory and practice of the West German Rechtsstaat have come into commotion again since the early 1970s. After the insecurity caused by the student movement and confronted with the economically compelled stopping of reforms, a conservative reactivation of public opinion began. Its spokesmen sought to mobilize a reservoir of legitimation in order to initiate law-and-order types of corrections in the legal-institutional structures of democracy.[40] The consequences are considerable: employment bans [*Berufsverbote*] on public employees affiliated with political parties without the corresponding outlawing of those parties; disciplinary proceedings against state employees for disloyalty (the Brückner case); the exhortation of loyalty statements not to the constitution but to the state (Pestel versus the publishers of the Mescalero article); amendments of the penal code to restrict freedom of opinion; change of the penal trial system and of trial legislation to restrict defendants' rights, especially the hastily enacted law prohibiting the defendant from contact with his attorney; the expansion of the state — i.e., of the constitutional surveillance apparatus. They all are important, although they are not the only tendencies in recent developments.[41] Such curtailments of the constitutional state, ironically passed as measures to defend and save it, are obviously anything but that: they are already the first steps to its destruction.

Franz Neumann is relevant today because the questions raised by this development must be answered. It is not enough to rejoice in the "carefree humor"[42] that allows our literarily ambitious contemporaries to distance themselves from the political realities

38. Cf. Hans Kastendiek, "Desintegratrion einer Integrationswissenschaft," in Blanke, Jürgens, Kastendiek, *Kritik der politischen Wissenschaft,* vol. 1 (Frankfurt, 1975), pp. 27ff.
39. "Angst und Politik" (1954) in Neumann, *Wirtschaft, op.cit.*, pp. 424ff.
40. Cf. Frankenberg *et al.*, "Politische Tendenzwende und Entwicklung des Rechts," in Tchidipur, ed., *Der bürgerliche Rechtsstaat* (Frankfurt, 1978), vol. I, pp. 238ff.
41. Cf. Reports of the Russell Tribunal (Berlin, 1978-79).
42. Hans-Magnus Enzensberger in *Kursbuch*, 56 (June 1979), p. 14.

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of the day. It would be equally wrong and hysterical to see the Federal Republic as drifting toward a new fascism. Rather, objective concern and theoretical seriousness are necessary as exactly the standards that can be acquired from a study of Neumann's biography and work and which result from a theoretically informed consideration of the long-range historical tendencies of German constitutional government.

Today we can recognize that the flight of legal and political sciences into a revived doctrine of natural law and thus into a value order transcending the limits of positive law is a camouflage under which questionable tendencies have developed in a changed form since the Weimar Republic: the increased power of the supreme court enabled by the federal constitutional court's jurisdiction to review laws and the encroachment of public and private bureaucracies upon parliamentary liberties under the legitimation of "contested democracy." To equate such tendencies in toto with the destruction of formal-legal rationality under fascism analyzed by Neumann would, of course, be an exaggeration. But it must be asked what the legitimation problems of contemporary parliamentarism, discerned by conservative and critical observers alike, mean in social and historical perspective. Such legitimation weaknesses seem to result from a general conflict between the constitutional rule of law and the imperatives of social systems transcending them and their solution seems to require the mobilization of ideologies transcending the given legal order.

A critical legal science will have to start at this point. A theoretically satisfactory solution can lie neither in systems theory nor in normative jurisprudence, nor in a critical one. Not in systems theory, because its "value-free concept of legitimacy"[43] methodically excludes the contradiction between right and might and elevates system-preservation itself to apparently neutral "supra-legality" (Kirchheimer);[44] not in normative jurisprudence, because this approach, instead of analyzing the social processes occurring below the plane of legality, tends to cover them up.[45] It can be learned from Neumann that a critical legal science must distinguish among three levels and reintegrate them back together: the changing legal conceptions which define bourgeois legality; the theory and practice of the law subordinated to state sovereignty, and the economic-social substratum, under whose imperatives conceptions and forms of law change. Such a theory, which in the last instance would have to be a historical social theory of legal rationality, does not yet exist. If this task is to be carried out, there is need for the active reappropriation of the tradition to which Franz Neumann, together with Ernst Fraenkel, Otto Kirchheimer and others belong. This tradition must no longer remain buried in the darkness of German legal history.

43. Niklas Luhmann, *Legitimation durch Verfahren* (Neuwied, 1969), p. 28, and *Rechtssoziologie* (Reinbek, 1972), pp. 259ff.

44. Cf. Ingeborg Maus, "Entwicklung und Funktionswandel der Theorie des bürgerlichen Rechtsstaates," in *Der bürgerliche Rechtsstaat, op.cit.*, vol. I, pp. 55ff.

45. Cf., e.g., "Ansätze zu einer kritischen Rechtswissenschaft," in Jahr-Maihofer, eds., *Rechtstheorie* (Frankfurt, 1971).

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# WOMEN RESPOND TO RACISM

## by Mary Papke, Eileen Manion, and Julia Visor

That the National Women's Studies Association took racism seriously enough to devote a whole conference to it — the 1981 Third National Conference: "Women Respond to Racism" — demonstrates the maturity of the organization. Adrienne Rich, who, along with Audre Lorde, gave the keynote address, raised the question of where women in Women's Studies should direct their loyalty: "How disobedient will Women's Studies be in the 1980s?" Rich also noted the public erasure of women's efforts to meet across color lines. It is significant that the local Hartford paper in reporting on the conference in Storrs, Conn., mentioned only the fact that separate housing for lesbians was being provided. The title and theme of the conference were left out altogether. This kind of erasure continues to dub the women's movement white and middle class in an effort to discredit it and limit it to the kind of media-manipulated feminism of a Virginia Slims ad.

However, even if women focus on an issue that might not seem academically legitimate, this does not make things easier. As Lorde emphasized, black and Third World women are angry and white women are afraid of that anger. They prefer not to confront it. Both Lorde and Rich pointed to the defensive structure of guilt which permits whites to acknowledge their racism and believe that they need do no more to receive absolution. Guilt, however, paralyzes, and makes change impossible. Lorde also brought up a touchy discussion which was to recur in both formal sessions and informal discussions: that racism was involved in the very organizing of the conference. No exemptions from conference fees had been made for Third World women. Obviously this meant that the conference would be dominated by white women able to pay or in organizations willing to pay their expenses. This was not the only instance that indicated a kind of ambivalence in the organization about whether members really wanted to deal with racism.

The conference organizers had decided that one of the principal features would be consciousness-raising groups in which individuals could meet and discuss their own experiences with racism. These groups were scheduled every morning during the three and a half-day conference and did not conflict with other sessions, workshops, or film showings, which were scheduled in the afternoon. Thus, the major focus was taken away from political or academic analyses of racism and placed on personal, psychological introspection. While it is all very well to say that racism has to be dealt with on more than just a theoretical basis, total strangers getting together to examine their consciences or "confess" seemed beside the point. In many ways, the idea of consciousness-raising groups seemed to evade rather than explore the issues. In addition, the fact that the organizers had also decided ahead of time that these groups should be divided along racial and ethnic lines was not reassuring. There was a group set up exclusively for white Jewish women, one for white women from the South, one for white working-class women, one for white middle-class women, one for white daughters of immigrants, one for white lesbians, and one for *all* "women of color." That Third World women were lumped together in one large group made it seem as though not very many of them were expected to attend the conference and, more importantly, implied that the diversity provided for white groups was not present among women of color. No rationale was given for the segregated groups and that did not bode well for their success.

The one hundred black and Third World women did in fact attend their assigned

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groups. There were Native Americans, indigenous Mexican-Americans, indigenous Afro-Americans, mainland-born Puerto Ricans, indigenous Asian-Americans, immigrant Asian-Americans, immigrant Mexican-Americans, island-born Puerto Ricans, immigrant Caribbeans, immigrant Indians, immigrant Arab-Americans, native Brazilians, native Indians, native Colombians — hardly a homogeneous group. The group facilitators (also women of color), instead of explaining the reason for segregated groups, suggested that the large group should break into smaller mixed groups to discuss traditional differences between people of various "colors." However, they were caught short when Jasleen, a tall East Indian woman (who had flown in for the conference from her job in Addis Ababa) angrily asked why the whites and the women of color had been separated and where this term, "women of color," had come from in the first place. These were only the first of many unanswered questions.

Amid great consternation and disagreement, the facilitators explained that separate meetings had been arranged so that women of color could gain solidarity and could deal with the racism among women of color against other women of color. But some women who had come prepared to "deal" with white women on the issue of racism could not be so easily mollified. They argued for immediate integration of the groups. Others, however, resisted this suggestion, saying they were tired of educating whites about racism. After much debate, it was finally agreed that the group facilitators for the women of color should set up a joint meeting with the white groups. In the meantime, the consciousness raisers, in accordance with the facilitators' plan, divided themselves into small discussion groups of eight or so. Nonetheless, a tone of intense aggravation undergirded the small-group session, and a deep discontent with the conference as a whole began to set in.

On the second day, someone in the groups suggested that the conference be stopped and that a new conference be organized. This suggestion, though it met with great applause, was not followed. It did, however, reveal the continued dissatisfaction women of color were experiencing with the way the conference was run. Alternately, it was suggested that the women of color demand that the next NWSA conference be devoted to racism once again, with black and Third World women in charge of planning it. This proposal was presented as a resolution to the NWSA Delegate Assembly (and accepted). To express solidarity and disapproval of conference proceedings, the women of color also decided to sit together, apart from whites, for most of their meals.

Sadly enough, too many familiar situations were recapitulated at the conference. As both Lorde and Rich noted in their opening addresses, women were bringing a great deal of energy and good will to the conference. This was needed to overcome problems confronting the women's movement. Certainly, in a period when feminism is increasingly challenged from the right, it is necessary to have real unity between women of color and white women who share common visions and beliefs, not a false union based on liberal sentimentality. However, energy and good will alone do not a good conference make. It was not possible to tell what, if any, principles of selection had been used to determine what panels would be chosen for the conference. Of the numerous sessions on politics, history, education, activism, and literature, only a few came to grips with the conference's theme. Many black and Third World women felt particularly outraged to find themselves in sessions which either sidestepped the issue of racism entirely or in which white women set themselves up as experts on black and Third World women. Often these self-professed experts offered information which was either outdated or simply inaccurate. And there were simply too many conflicting sessions.

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Of the criticisms voiced after the conference, several major issues remain unresolved. One was the relation between academic research and activism; another concerned naive and uncritical work. The confusion reflected an ambivalence within the organization. Many members emphasized creating and maintaining an academic network; others wanted to move the organization in a more activist direction. The attempt to explore workable relations between research and politics was not only one of the explicit themes of the whole conference, but it was also the cause of a lot of conflict and frustration. This problem is inevitable in an organization that tries to be both feminist and academic in orientation, and the hybrid character of NWSA is ultimately one of the things that keeps the organization interesting but may also cause some unmendable schisms. Since there were about 200 planned sessions, only a small random sample can be described. Some sessions seemed to be promising, and sometimes this promise was fulfilled, but just as often it wasn't. There was more "female self-aggrandizement" than there should have been. That, however, may have been inevitable, since women intellectuals and academics have only in the last 10 years had some social space for this activity.

*Anti-Semitism: The Unacknowledged Racism.* This panel was organized by a group calling itself Feminists against Anti-Semitism, and its Statement of Philosophy was distributed at the beginning of the session. The statement made the point that: "Today, when explicit anti-Semitism is no longer acceptable, it has surfaced as a virulent anti-Zionism which rejects the right of the Jewish state to exist.... Vilifying Jews who support Zionism is anti-Semitism." A number of speakers on the panel referred to incidents at the U.N. World Conference in Copenhagen in which Israeli and other Jewish women were attacked by Palestinian women and their supporters. Such incidents and the lack of response to them by other women at the conference convinced the Jewish delegates that there was more anti-Semitism in the international women's movement than had previously been acknowledged. Chaired by Esther Broner, the panel included a presentation by Paula Hyman, who discussed some of the historical aspects of modern anti-Semitism. She distinguished a liberal-left anti-Semitism that found the Jew an "irritant" — a deviant who resisted assimilation into "universalizing" Western culture — from right-wing and reactionary anti-Semitism, which stemmed from fear and insecurity associated with modernization and personalized the tension-creating changes in the world by seeing the Jew as responsible for them. Judith Plaskow then discussed the theological background of anti-Semitism and traced its roots to the early Christian Church, which needed the Jew as victim to bear witness to Christ's divinity. She also noted some of the anti-Semitism inherent in recent feminist scholarship which tries to make the Jews exclusively responsible for patriarchy and patriarchal, goddess-suppressing monotheism, or which claims that Christianity was a radical break from Jewish misogyny. Andrea Dworkin, in her discussion, "Anti-Semitism and Sex," described the stereotyped "sexualization" of the Jew — both male and female. In Nazi and other anti-Semitic propaganda, the Jewish male is portrayed as a dangerous rapist and the Jewish female is characterized as a harlot, a sexual provocateur who will contaminate the Aryan male. She also noted the use of concentration camp images and themes in contemporary pornography: "The concentration camp woman, a Jew...became the hidden sexual secret of our time. The barely faded, easily accessible memory of her sexual degradation is at the heart of the sadism against all women that is now promoted in mainstream sexual propaganda." Dworkin also accused male Jewish writers of complicity with anti-Semites in perpetuating sexist images of Jewish women. Phyllis Chesler was the last speaker on the panel. She recounted some of her own experiences with anti-Semitism

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in the women's movement. She said that such encounters reminded her that she was Jewish and eventually motivated her to "come out" as a Zionist. Chesler's appeal to personal experience was annoyingly evasive. Certainly it was unconvincing as an argument for Zionist politics, since it was no argument at all, but merely an attempt to use her own reputation and prestige to force the audience, out of guilt, into accepting her viewpoint, for fear of appearing anti-Semitic.

*Women's Answer to Racism: Third World Women's Control over Their Bodies.* At this session Elizabeth Fisher, author of *Woman's Creation: Sexual Evolution and the Shaping of Society*, made a few brief and very general remarks based on what she had said in her book about Australian aboriginal women and women among the Kalahari San. She claimed that these women had more control over their bodies and more freedom to decide when to have children, how many children to have, whether or not to carry a pregnancy to term, than many women in more developed societies had. A great deal of discussion and controversy arose, first over her terms which imposed a Western frame of reference (e.g., "control over the body") onto very different cultures, and in addition over her failure to mention the current situation of much of the Third World, where women's fertility is manipulated in various ways through forced sterilization, through distribution of ineffective or unsafe means of birth control by multinational drug companies. Most of the more complex questions related to population planning and control were never raised in this session, where various myths about women in "primitive" societies were in competition. According to Fisher, Third World women were self-determining in a way that Western women might envy, and according to members of the audience, these women were at the mercy of the multinationals. It is pathetically ironic that white middle-class women in North America must still defend the possibility of avoiding motherhood, while so many other women must defend themselves against enforced sterilization. It is impossible to discuss this contradiction meaningfully, however, when so many other forces related to national economic policies come into play.

*Fiction, Autobiography, and Self-Presentation.* Given the description in the program and given the conference theme, this session should have focused on black American writers whose works centered on racism or whose biographies showed the racism perpetrated against them in the publishing or criticism fields. And the presenters, it seemed, should have given an academic or personal response to the material reviewed. Instead, the first speaker, Carol Kessler, gave information on the genres through which antebellum blacks told us of their lives. The second speaker, Susan Koppelman, told how hard it was to make selections for her forthcoming anthology of short stories by women writers. The session had little to do with black people but almost nothing to do with racism and the response of women to it.

*Training Educators to Recognize and Respond to Racial Bias in Teaching and Counseling.* This session was one of the few that did what it said it would do. The program booklet stated that "participants would discuss research on the effects of teachers' racial attitudes on their classroom behavior, ways in which teachers can assess their own racial attitudes and work to make them more positive, and the different strategies participants have implemented in their attempts to increase faculty awareness of discrimination." This panel was racially mixed in that there was one black speaker, but the presentation stood out because the entire panel was neither patronizing nor denigrating. They talked about findings and strategies they had used to overcome racial bias in teaching and counseling. What the speakers brought to the conference was an awareness that teachers and counselors are products of their society and are not free from its attitudes. In addition, they presented material to help others

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think about addressing this issue.

*Pornography and the Tyranny of Slenderness.* The primary purpose of this session seemed to be for Susan Griffin and Kim Chernin to promote their new books: respectively, *Pornography and Silence: Culture's Revenge against Nature,* and *The Obsession: Reflections on the Tyranny of Slenderness.* Neither of these works had much to do with racism, although Griffin claims to have uncovered the underlying similarity between the mental structures of the pornographer and the racist. What Griffin discussed in her presentation were generalizations about nature-culture, emotion-intellect, mind-body splits typical of Western thought which, through repressions and projections, end up producing the racist's or the pornographer's mind set. In the process of arguing this similarity of attitudes, Griffin said little of interest about either racism or pornography. Kim Chernin managed an even more tortured argument. She described herself as a "reformed anorexic" and discussed the attitude of the compulsive dieter who has internalized "the racist-victim paradigm." According to Chernin, the compulsive dieter sees her own flesh as the despised Other and attempts to rid herself of it by fasting or extreme dieting. Her comparison of the compulsive dieter and the victims of racism was insulting and trivial.

*Women Abolitionists: Black and White Women in the Struggle against Slavery.* At this session Susan S. Kissel and Penelope A. Smith presented their work in progress on Susan Walker, a 19th-century New England abolitionist, and Nancy Dodson, a freed slave. They have discovered a diary kept by Walker and are in the process of editing it. Walker established a school for black women in Washington, D.C., in the 1960s. In her journal she describes in great detail the stories of many former slaves who came to her school, and in particular the life of Nancy Dodson, a black woman who worked with Walker as companion, helper and fellow teacher. In their work, Kissel and Smith are trying to reclaim some of the 19th-century efforts of white and black women to work together — accounts that have been erased in conventional histories.

*Black-White Friendships: Why Won't Felicia and Nanette Be Friends?* Felicia Friendly Thomas is a black psychologist and Nanette Bruckner is a white psychologist. They work at the same institution, but before working on this conference presentation, they had little to do with one another besides see each other at meetings from time to time. Thomas talked of her research on the ways in which people become friends or what prevents them from doing so. Bruckner, on the other hand, talked of past personal experiences that have restrained her from becoming friends with blacks. Both seemed to say that it was very unlikely, given their personal backgrounds, histories, attitudes, etc., that they would ever become friends. Yet, in working together on this project, they started to become friends. This session was not a dynamic one, primarily because the speakers evaded the explosive issue of the struggles in close black-white relations. The attendance was also meager, probably owing to the fact that 31 other sessions conflicted with it. In any case, about half of the few participants left after half an hour to attend a more promising session featuring Paule Marshall.

*'Brown Girl, Brownstones': A Reading and Discussion.* This was a superb session. Marshall first talked about the origins of her just re-released book. She spoke of the plight of the Barbadian woman in this country and how that brought out a wit and poetry which allowed them and their families to survive. The novel is based on what Marshall learned from her mother, a Barbadian immigrant to whom the book is dedicated. Marshall delighted the audience with a reading from the book, complete with wondrous Barbadian rhythms. Mary Helen Washington's response emphasized why *Brown Girl, Brownstones* had been important and still is. Though Silla Boyce, the mother in the book, is an immigrant Barbadian, Silla is also the archetypal American

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black mother, symbolizing the struggle for liberation among black people. Informative and entertaining, this session offered respite from the conference battles which, by the end of the first day, were already raging.

*This Bridge Called my Back: Bridging Academics with Activism.* The editors of and some of the contributors to the recently published anthology *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (Persephone Press, 1981) discussed their experiences with racism in both academia and the women's movement. Merle Woo described her encounters with oppression teaching English, Women's Studies, and Asian American Studies on the West Coast. Barbara Cameron, a gay Indian activist, articulated her sense of isolation in both the lesbian and Indian movements. Not only must she deal with the "rampant racism" in white, gay activist groups, but she must also deal with the homophobia of Third World communities. For her neither oppression can have a higher priority. One woman spoke of the reaction against her radical feminist leadership as a Chinese-American writer: the bourgeoisie had tried to make her invisible by ignoring what she was saying. And Gloria Anzaldua spoke of the denial of the ancient spiritual gifts the women of her Chicana culture bear to this society. Barbara Smith noted the degree to which Women's Studies courses and programs marginalize black and Third World women by relegating them to a separate category. She suggested that black women's writings be included in discussing all kinds of topics in Women's Studies courses, not just segregated into a unit on black women — a practice that reinforces the sense that the material is neither central nor important. Their challenge to Women's Studies was clear: if this discipline does not touch and change the lives of all women, what is involved in it is actually nothing more than feminine self-aggrandizement. They reiterated for those lulled into inactivity by mainstream America that women continue to be oppressed and that Third World women in this country face an even more intense oppression.

*Revising the Canon: Consciousness Raising in Literature Classrooms.* The session was meant to be practical and teacher-oriented; extensive, annotated reading lists for several literature courses were handed out and each speaker described her techniques and rationale for inclusion of texts. Panel moderator Shirley Morahan opened with general comments on problems with canon revision: how does one use the present canon; how much historical and critical research is necessary to effect canonization of re-evaluated and new texts; how does one treat journals, letters, diaries, etc. Her tentative answer was to place emphasis on the historical importance of fictional texts and to allow student response to generate course concerns. A more rigorous approach was seen in Carey Kaplan's description of her course in 18th-century English literature and in Joyce Vann's discussion of 19th-century British literature. Both stressed the need for an interdisciplinary approach and the inclusion of art and socio-historical material as grounding for canon and refound fiction, journals, fantasy, children's and popular literature. Orlee Holder's presentation could have been the most sophisticated had she not been pressed for time. As it was, she could only offer provocative remarks on post-structuralist reading of 20th-century women's literature.

*Uncle Tom and Miss Ann: Moving Toward Self-Definition.* Despite the title, this proved to be one of the more classically academic sessions — a product of engaged research on the specific conference theme. Marlene Springer focused on the literary yoking together of sexism and racism in her "Uncle Tom's Wide, Wide World." After offering a brief overview of some 19th-century anti-slavery literature, Springer discussed Stowe's infamous novel and the non-violent and feminist philosophy therein. By depicting Uncle Tom as "total woman" and through interracial relations, Stowe warned that one must follow or acquire non-patriarchal power or perish. Springer's

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liberal, revisionist reading was primarily a defense of Stowe as a writer; the critique of Stowe's politics and racist beliefs remained perfunctory throughout. Mary Davidson attempted to bridge the gap between social and "pure" research in her analysis of Lillian Smith's *Strange Fruit* (1944) by offering historical background on lynching, comparing state statistics on deaths with ERA state ratification data. Davidson proceeded to key this material into her critique of Smith's novel of interracial passion, pointing out that Smith used lynching (a form of "justice" supposedly obsolete by 1944) as entry into her portrayal of sexism-racism, sexual repression-sadism conjunctures. Going one step further, Elizabeth Schultz presented "Out of the Woods and into the World: A Study of Interracial Relationships between Women in American Novels." Schultz first stated that interracial male relations in novels by white males are always idyllic, symbolic or stereotypical; one assumes female unions are similarly treated if present at all. Schultz argued that white women's novels do not mythicize characters; in their works one either sees white women seeking self-definition or white women using blacks as spiritual mentors. However, these works are usually burdened with racism and one must turn to novels by women of color to find works of proper consciousness. To assume, as Schultz does, that racism is inherently one-way is cavalier and dangerous; as stated earlier, this erasure of reality (and critical lip service to women of color) is self-limiting and stultifying.

*Teaching a 'Unit' on Black Women Writers.* This was one of the few sessions to actively engage in discussion of "racial illusions versus real alienation." Pamela Annas presented " 'My Lady Ain't No Lady': Teaching the Poetry of Pat Parker and Audre. Lorde," speaking of the politics of a white lesbian teaching black lesbian poetry. Her reading of poems owed much to her subjects and her philosophy of un-naming, re-naming and redefining the world by re-naming brought to mind certain radical French feminist theories as well as the work of Adrienne Rich and Mary Daly. While this talk was well-received, it was clear from discussion afterward that the first two speakers had hit closer to the bone. Mary Helen Washington and Linda Dittmar gave personal and critical accounts of their team-taught course in women's literature. They had originally conceived of the idea as a means to racially balance both the authoritative viewpoint and to allow "expert" presentation of racially balanced material. Both women agreed the experiment had been an absolute failure. Dittmar stated that they had been naive to think that the mere presence of a black woman and a white woman would open up their students to higher consciousness; indeed, she believed that despite their good intentions, they had failed to transcend racist-racial patterns themselves. Washington said that she herself at first bought into racial illusions and racial politics — e.g., "the illusion of the 'perfection' of Dittmar and the illusions of her whiteness" versus her own blackness — a clear indication of racial-racist self-defense or self-perception effecting not cognition and equality but alienation. As Washington pointed out, the "refusal to be known is at the heart of racial issues," offering as an aside the fact that the conference was racist in that the racial imbalance of participants made it impossible to "know" women of color. Washington further stated she would never again divide up a course along racial lines (either perfect integration or pure segregation) nor would she rely on false oppositions, false identification of material into closed categories to teach a course. Her last example of false identification was the most controversial; Washington pointed out that "black" as complete self-definition was as false a racial illusion as white "perfection." A heated discussion followed, but was cut off because of time.

Although there were problems with the NWSA conference, it was not a waste of time. The marginalization of black and Third World women in the women's

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movement and in women's studies, the mistrust this generates, and the defensive guilt white women assume in relation to black women for both of these conditions cannot be easily dissipated. The NWSA did make an effort, as an organization, to confront these problems — an effort that took some courage since the organization is in a very shaky financial state and perhaps cannot afford to alienate members preferring more academically respectable conference themes. Women's studies is not thriving or expanding at very many universities, and there is a temptation to play it safe by attempting to project a more positive face. The NWSA did not make that choice. Maybe this year's strains and efforts will ultimately produce real unity between black and white women — even if the process is a very painful one.

## ANTI-WORK AND THE STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL

### by John Zerzan

The debacle of the air controllers' strike and the growing difficulties unions are having in attracting new members (and holding onto old ones — decertification elections have increased for the last 10 years)[1] are two phenomena that could be used to depict American workers as quite tamed overall and adjusted to their lot. But such a picture of conservative stasis would be quite unfaithful to the reality of the work culture, which is now so *un*-tamed as to be evoking unprecedented attention and countermeasures.

Before tackling the subject of anti-work, a few words on the status of business might be in order. Bradshaw and Vogel's *Corporations and Their Critics* sees enterprise today as "faced by uncertainty and hostility on every hand." In fact, this fairly typical book finds that "latent mistrust has grown to the point at which lack of confidence in business's motives has become the overwhelming popular response to the role of the large corporation in the United States."[2] An early '81 survey of 24,000 prominent students, as determined by *Who's Who Among American High School Students*, showed a strong anti-business sentiment; less than 20 percent of the 24,000 agreed, for example, with the proposition that most companies charge fair prices.[3] Not surprising, then, are Peter Berger's conclusions about current attitudes. His "New Attack on the Legitimacy of Business" is summed up, in part, thusly: "When people genuinely believe in the 'rightness' of certain social arrangements, those arrangements are experienced as proper and worthy of support — that is, as legitimate.... American business once enjoyed this kind of implicit social charter. It does not today."[4]

Within business, one begins to see the spread of work refusal. *Nation's Business* strikes what has become a familiar chord in its introduction to Dr. H.J.

1. William E. Fulmer, "Decertification: Is the Current Trend a Threat to Collective Bargaining?" *California Management Review*, Fall 1981, p. 14. Also *Dollars and Sense*, "Union Decertification Elections," February 1980, p. 8.
2. Thornton Bradshaw and David Vogel, eds., *Corporations and Their Critics* (New York, 1981), p. xvi.
3. *Nation's Business*, March 1981, p. 20.
4. Peter L. Berger, "New Attack on the Legitimacy of Big Business," *Harvard Business Review*, September-October 1981, p. 82.

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Freudenberger's "How to Survive Burn-Out": "For many business people, life has lost its meaning. Work has become mere drudgery, off-hours are spent in a miasma of dullness."[5] Similar is *Datamation's* "Burnout: Victims and Avoidances," because this disabling trauma "seems to be running rampant" among data processors.[6] Veninga and Spradley's *The Work Stress Connection: How to Cope with Job Burnout*[7] was condensed by the December 1981 *Readers' Digest*.

To continue in this bibliographic vein, it is worth noting the sharp increase in scholarly articles such as Kahn's "Work, Stress, and Individual Well-Being," Abdel-Halim's "Effects of Role Stress — Job Design — Technology Interaction on Employee Work Satisfaction," and Behling and Holcombe's "Dealing with Employee Stress."[8] *Studies in Occupational Stress,* a series initiated in 1978 by Cooper and Kasl, dates the formal study of this facet of organized misery.

There is other related evidence of aversion to work, including this reaction in its literal sense, namely a growth of illnesses such as job-related allergies and at least a significant part of the advancing industrial accident rate since the early 60s. Comes to mind the machinist who becomes ill by contact with machine oil, the countless employees who seem to be accident-prone in the job setting. We are just beginning to see some awareness of this sort of phenomenon, the consequences of which may be very significant.

And, of course, there is absenteeism, probably the most common sign of antipathy to work and a topic that has called forth a huge amount of recent attention from the specialists of wage-labor. Any number of remedies are hawked; Frank Kuzmits' offering, "No Fault: A New Strategy for Absenteeism,"[9] for example. Deitsch and Dilts' "Getting Absent Workers Back on the Job: The Case of General Motors," puts the annual cost to GM at $1 billion plus, and observes that "Absenteeism is of increasing concern to management and organized labor alike."[10]

There are other well-known elements of the anti-work syndrome. The inability of some firms to get a shift working on time is a serious problem; this is why Nucor Corp. offers a 4 percent pay hike for each ton of steel produced above a target figure, up to a 100 percent pay bonus for those who show up as scheduled and work the whole shift. The amount of drinking and drug-taking on the job is another form of protest, occasioning a great proliferation of employee alcoholism and drug abuse programs by every sort of company.[11] Tersine and Russell confront the "staggering" employee theft phenomenon, observing that it has become "more widespread and professional in recent years."[12] Turnover (considered as a function of the quit rate and not due to

5. Herbert J. Freudenberger, "How to Survive Burnout," *Nation's Business,* December 1980, p. 53.

6. Merrill Cherlin, "Burnout: Victims and Avoidances," *Datamation,* July 1981, p. 92.

7. Robert L. Veninga and James P. Spradley, *The Work Stress Connection: How to Cope with Job Burnout* (Boston, 1981).

8. Robert L. Kahn, "Work, Stress and Individual Well-Being," *Monthly Labor Review,* May 1981; Ahmed A. Abdel-Halim, "Effects of Role Stress – Job Design – Technology Interaction on Employee Satisfaction," *Academy of Management Journal,* June 1981; Orlando Behling and F. Douglas Holcombe, "Dealing with Employee Stress," *MSU Business Topics,* Spring 1981.

9. Frank Kuzmits, "No Fault: A New Strategy for Absenteeism Control," *Personnel Journal,* May 1981.

10. Clarence A. Deitsch and David A. Dilts, "Getting Absent Workers Back on the Job: The Case of General Motors," *Business Horizons,* September-October 1981, p. 52.

11. Robert Holman's "Beyond Contemporary Employee Assistance Plans," *Personnel Administrator,* September 1981, notes that more than 2,000 such EAP's were established in U.S. firms between 1972 and 1978.

12. Richard J. Tersine and Roberta S. Russell, "Internal Theft: the Multi-Billion Dollar Disappearing Act," *Business Horizons,* November-December 1981, pp. 11-12.

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layoffs, of course), very high since the early 1970s, has inched up further.[13]

All of these aspects come together to produce the much publicized productivity, or output per hour worked, crisis. Blake and Moulton provide some useful points; they recognize, for example, that the "declining productivity rate and the erosion of quality in industry have caused grave concern in this country" and that "industry is pouring more money than ever before into training and development," while "the productivity rate continues to fall." Further, "attitudes among workers themselves," including, most basically, an "erosion of obedience to authority," are seen as at the root of the problem. Unlike many confused mainstream analyses of the situation — or the typical leftist denial of it as either a media chimera or an invention of the always all-powerful corporations — our two professors can at least realize that "Basic to the decline in productivity is the breakdown of the authority-obedience means of control"; this trend, moreover, "which is one manifestation of a broader social disorder...will continue indefinitely without corrective action," they say.[14]

Librarian R.S. Byrne gives a useful testimonial to the subject in her compendious "Sources on Productivity," which lists some of the huge outpouring of articles, reports, books, newsletters, etc., from a variety of willing helpers of business, including those of the Work in America Institute, the American Productivity Center, the American Center for the Quality of Work Life, and the Project on Technology, Work and Character, to name a few. As Byrne notes, "One can scarcely pick up any publication without being barraged by articles on the topic written from every possible perspective." The reason for the outpouring is of course available to her: "U.S. productivity growth has declined continuously in the past 15 years and the trend appears to be worsening."[15]

The August 1981 *Personnel Administrator*, devoted entirely to the topic, declares that "Today poor productivity is the United States' number one industrial problem."[16] *Administrative Management* reasons, in George Crosby's "Getting Back to Basics on Productivity," that no progress can occur "until all individuals begin viewing productivity as their own personal responsibility.[17] "How Deadly Is the Productivity Disease?" asks Stanley Henrici recently in the *Harvard Business Review*.[18] An endless stream, virtually an obsession.

Dissatisfaction with work and the consequences of this have even drawn the Pope's attention. John Paul II, in his *Laborem Exercens* (Through Work) encyclical of September 1981, examines the idea of work and the tasks of modern management. On a more prosaic level, one discovers that growing employee alienation has forced a search for new forms of work organization.[19] The December 1981 *Nation's Business*, in fact, has located a new consensus in favor of "more worker involvement in decision-

13. Malcolm S. Cohen and Arthur R. Schwartz, "U.S. Labor Turnover: Analysis of a New Measure," *Monthly Labor Review*, November 1980.

14. Robert Blake and Jane Moulton, "Increasing Productivity Through Behavioral Science," *Personnel*, May-June 1981, pp. 59-60.

15. R.S. Byrne, "Sources on Productivity," *Harvard Business Review*, September-October 1981, p. 36.

16. *Personnel Administrator*, August 1981, p. 23.

17. George Crosby, "Getting Back to Basics on Productivity," *Administrative Management*, November 1981, p. 31.

18. Stanley B. Henrici, "How Deadly is the Productivity Disease?" *Harvard Business Review*, November-December 1981, p. 123.

19. Donald V. Nightingale cites evidence of "growing employee disenchantment," such that "The modern work organization faces mounting pressures from within and without to meet the challenge of employee alienation and dissatisfaction." "Work, Formal Participation, and Employee Outcomes," *Sociology of Work and Occupations*, August 1981, p. 277.

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making."[20] James O'Toole's *Making America Work*[21] emphasizes the changed work culture with its low motivation and prescribes giving workers the freedom to design their own jobs, set their own work schedules and decide their own salaries.

The productivity crisis has clearly led to the inauguration of worker participation, in a burgeoning number of co-determination arrangements since the mid-70s. The May 11, 1981 *Business Week* announced the arrival of a new day in U.S. management with its cover story and special report, "The New Industrial Relations." Proclaiming the "almost unnoticed" ascendancy of a "fundamentally different way of managing people," it claimed that the "authoritarian" approach of the "old, crude workplace ethos" is definitely passing, aided "immeasurably" by the growing collaboration of the trade unions. "With the adversarial approach outmoded, the trend is toward more worker involvement in decisions on the shop floor — and more job satisfaction, tied to productivity."[22]

Shortly after this analysis, *Business Week*'s "A Try at Steel-Mill Harmony" recounted the labor-management efforts being made between the U.S. steel industry and the United Steelworkers "to create a cooperative labor climate where it matters most: between workers and bosses on the mill floor." The arrangements, which are essentially production teams made up of supervisors, local union officials, and workers, were provided for in 1980 contracts with the nine major steel companies, but not implemented until after early 1981 union elections because of the unpopularity of the idea among many steelworkers. "The participation-team concept. . . was devised as a means of improving steel's sluggish productivity growth rate,"[23] the obvious reason for a climate of disfavor in the mills.

In a series of *Fortune* articles appearing in June, July and August 1981, the new system of industrial organization is discussed in some depth. "Shocked by faltering productivity," according to *Fortune,* America's corporate managers have moved almost overnight toward the worker involvement approach (after long ignoring the considerable Northern European experience), which "challenges a system of authority and accountability that has served through most of history."[24] With a rising hopefulness, big capital's leading magazine announces that "Companies which have had time to weigh the consequences of participative management are finding that it informs the entire corporate culture." Employees "are no longer just workers; they become the lowest level of management,"[25] it says, echoing such recent books as Myers' *Every Employee a Manager.*[26]

The bottom line of such programs, which also go by the name "Quality of Work Life," is never lost sight of. G.T. Strippoli, a plant manager of the TRW Corp., provides the guiding principle: "The workers know that if I feel there's no payback to the company in the solution they arrive at, there will be a definite no. I'm not here to give away the store or run a country club."[27]

In effect, in about 100 auto manufacturing and assembly plants, the co-management method replaces the traditional, failed ways of pushing productivity.

20. *Nation's Business,* "Unlocking the Productivity Door," December 1981, p. 55.
21. James O'Toole, *Making America Work* (New York, 1981). Reviews by Amar Bhide, *Wall Street Journal,* October 20, 1981.
22. *Business Week,* "The New Industrial Relations," May 11, 1981, p. 85.
23. *Business Week,* "A Try at Steel-Mill Harmony," June 29, 1981, p. 135.
24. Charles G. Burck, "Working Smarter," *Fortune,* June 15, 1981, p. 70.
25. Burck, "What Happens When Workers Manage Themselves," *Fortune,* July 27, 1981, p. 69.
26. M. Scott Myers, *Every Employee a Manager* (New York, 1981).
27. Burck, "What Happens. . . ," p. 69.

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Auto, with virtually nothing to lose, has jumped for the effort to get workers to help run the factories. "As far as I'm concerned, it's the only way to operate the business — there isn't another way in today's world," says GM President F. James McDonald.[28] United Auto Workers committeemen and stewards are key co-leaders with management in the drive to "gain higher product quality and lower absenteeism."[29] Similar is the campaign for worker involvement in the AT&T empire, formalized in the 1980 contract with the Communication Workers of America.

The fight to bolster output per hour is as much the unions' as it is management's; anti-work feelings are equally responsible for the decline of the bodyguards of capital as they are for the productivity crisis proper. AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer T.R. Donahue has found in the general productivity impasse the message that the time has come for a "limited partnership — a marriage of convenience" with business.[30] *Fortune* sees in formal collaboration "interesting possibilities for reversing the decline" of organized labor.[31]

*Business Week*'s "Quality of Work Life: Catching On" observes that shop-floor worker participation and the rest of the QWL movement is "taking root in everyday life."[32] Along the same lines, the October 1981 issue of *Productivity* notes that half of 500 firms surveyed now have such involvement programs.[33]

William Ouchi's 1981 contribution to the industrial relations literature, *Theory Z,* cites recent research, such as that of Harvard's James Medoff and M.I.T.'s Kathryn Abraham, to point out the productivity edge that unionized companies in the United States have over non-union ones.[34] And David Lewin's "Collective Bargaining and the Quality of Work Life" argues for a further union presence in the QWL movement, based on organized labor's past ability to recognize the constraints of work and support the ultimate authority of the workplace.[35]

It is clear that unions hold the high ground in a growing number of these programs, and there seems to be a trend toward co-management at ever higher levels. Douglas Fraser, UAW president, sits on the board of directors at Chrysler — a situation likely to spread to the rest of auto — and the Teamsters union appears close to putting its representative on the board at Pan-American Airways. Joint labor-management efforts to boost productivity in construction have produced about a dozen important local collaborative setups involving the building trades unions, like Columbus' MOST (Management and Organized Labor Striving Together), Denver's Union Jack, and PEP (Planning Economic Progress) in Beaumont, Texas. *Business Horizons* editorialized in 1981 about "the newly established Industrial Board with such luminaries as Larry Shaprin of DuPont and Lane Kirkland of the AFL-CIO" as a "mild portent" of the growing formal collaboration.[36] The board, a reincarnation of the Labor Management Board that expired in 1978, is chaired by Kirkland and the chairman of Exxon, Clifton C. Garvin Jr.

The defeat in 1979 of the Labor Law Reform Act, which would have greatly

28. Burck, "Working Smarter," p. 70.
29. Burck, "What's in it for the Unions," *Fortune,* August 24, 1981, p. 89.
30. Burck, "Working Smarter," p. 70.
31. Burck, "What's in it...," p. 89.
32. *Business Week,* "Quality of Work Life: Catching On," September 21, 1981, p. 72.
33. As noted in the September 21, 1981, *Wall Street Journal.*
34. William G. Ouchi, *Theory Z: How American Business Can Meet the Japanese Challenge* (Reading, Mass., 1981), p. 114.
35. David Lewin, "Collective Bargaining and the Quality of Work Life," *Organizational Dynamics,* Autumn 1981, especially p. 52.
36. *Business Horizons,* "The Eighties," January-February 1981, p. 7.

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increased government support to unionization, was seen by many as almost catastrophic given labor's organizing failures. But the economic crisis, perhaps especially in light of generous union concessions to the auto, airlines, rubber, trucking and other industries, may provide the setting for a "revitalization" of the national order including a real institutionalization of labor's social potential to contain the mounting anti-work challenge. [37]

There is already much pointing to such a possibility, beyond even the huge worker participation-QWL movement with its vital union component. The 1978 Trilateral Commission on comparative industrial relations spoke in very glowing terms about the development of neo-corporatist institutions (with German "co-determination" by unions and management as its model).[38] *Business Week* of June 30, 1980, a special issue on "The Reindustrialization of America," proclaimed that "nothing short of a new social contract" between business, labor and government, and "sweeping changes in basic institutions" could stem the country's industrial decline.[39] Thus, when the AFL-CIO's Kirkland called in late 1981 for a tripartite National Reindustrialization Board, a concept first specifically advanced by investment banker Felix Rohatyn, the recent theoretical precedents are well in place. One of the main underlying arguments by Rohatyn and others is that labor will need the state to help enforce its productivity programs in its partnership with management.

Thus would spreading "worker involvement" be utilized, but shepherded by the most powerful of political arrangements. Wilber and Jameson's "Hedonism and Quietism" puts the matter in general yet historical terms: "Ways must be found to revitalize mediating institutions from the bottom up. A good example is Germany's efforts to bring workers into a direct role in decision-making."[40]

A change of this sort might appear to be too directly counter to the ideology of the Reagan government, but it would actually be quite in line with the goal of renewed social control minus spending outlays. Washington, after all, has been trying to reduce its instrumentalities because this giant network of programs is past its ability to coherently manage, just as its cutbacks also reflect the practical failure of government social pacification programs.

Meanwhile, the refusal of work grows. One final example is the extremely high teen-age unemployment rate, which continues to climb among all groups and is the object of a growing awareness that a very big element is simply a rejection of work, especially low-skill work, by the young.[41] And legion are the reports that describe the habits of teen-agers who do work as characterized by habitual tardiness, chronic absenteeism, disrespect for supervisors and customers, etc. Which recalls the larger picture drawn by Frederick Herzberg in his "New Perspectives on the Will to Work": "the problem is work motivation — all over the world. It's simply a matter of people not wanting to work."[42]

37. Rep. Stanley Lundine, in "Congress Takes a Look at Human Innovation and Productivity," *Enterprise*, December 1981-January 1982 (pp. 10-11), predicts that government will try to establish a "cooperative relationship among government, labor and management" in the interest of resolving work conflict and raising productivity.

38. George Ross, "What is Progressive about Unions," *Theory and Society*, 10:5 (September 1981), p. 639.

39. *Business Week*, "The Reindustrializing of America," June 30, 1980, p. 55.

40. Charles K. Wilber and Kenneth P. Jameson, "Hedonism and Quietism," *Society*, November-December 1981, p. 28.

41. *U.S. News & World Report*, "Why So Many Jobs for Youths Go Begging," November 23, 1981.

42. Frederick I. Herzberg, "New Perspectives on the Will to Work," *Personnel Administrator*, December 1979, p. 72.

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The gravity of the anti-work situation seems now to be approaching an unprecedented structural counter-revolution. Tripartism dates back to World War I, to Coolidge in peacetime, but the addition of a mass-participation schema is just beginning to emerge as a national hypothesis. Of course, this nascent reaction intersects with a political tide of non-participation (e.g., declining voter turnout, massive non-registration for the draft rolls, growing tax evasion). The larger culture of withdrawal, from the state as from work, will make this integration effort highly problematic, and may even produce a more effective exposure of capital's organization of life given that organization's heightened dependence on its victims' active participation.

## ANTI-WORK?

### by Tim Luke

In "Anti-Work and the Struggle for Control," John Zerzan argues that America's over-exploited working classes once again are verging on total revolt. Although many points in his arguments are difficult to firmly pin down, Zerzan apparently holds that the recent increases in a whole range of work avoidance activities are the preliminary signs of a general crisis looming just over the horizon as the Reagan revolution slowly unfolds its program for the American economy. The broad-gauged systematic challenge of "work refusal," in its many subtle forms across the spectrum from absenteeism to on-the-job drug abuse, now poses such a basic threat to corporate capital that big business and top management have retreated to the last bastions of co-determination, co-optation and, ultimately, corporativism in order to merely survive the coming crisis. Thus, Zerzan issues a warning to this resurgent proletarian force. While these new industrial programs for "job enrichment" and "worker involvement" might be construed as some positive sign of capital's final capitulation to labor in preparation for building an equal partnership in the corporative administration of the means of production, in fact these new psychosocial schemes merely are the latest subterfuge for elaborating scientific management and complete administrative control in the workplace.

Yet, the growing trend toward work refusal by the working classes in the United States and other advanced capitalist countries cannot be reduced so simply into the latest phase of the classic struggle over control in the factories. Admittedly, the workers are in danger of losing more dignity and freedom on the job. Still, the "quality of work life" movement, and its guiding force of "Japanophilia," has been inspired by more than the bourgeoisie's eternal need to repress the proletariat. As Zerzan notes, these steadily increasing levels of absenteeism, alcohol abuse, disability scams, drug abuse, job-related accidents and worker sabotage do present a systemic threat to management as it seeks to maintain a stable, trained and dedicated workforce in its offices and factories. The aversion to work, however, does not stem so much from the failures of capitalism and the discontent of the workers so much as it flows from the successes of capitalist integration and the privatistic withdrawal of the workers to take fullest advantage of their integration.

Nearly three generations ago, the more progressive fraction of top management

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made a series of basic marketing and administrative decisions about workers and consumers. More control, greater profit and more stable returns, it was decided, could accrue from de-skilling the workers and technologically intensifying the material means of production instead of protecting proletarian skills and insulating the technical process of production from scientific advancements. Industrial tasks purposely were devalued and degraded to realize new economies of efficient scale. Rather than continuing their status as technical polymaths, the workers were reduced systematically to "trained gorillas," as Gramsci maintained, whose time as semi-skilled machine tenders was rented out to big business.

At the same juncture, to partially compensate for these lost skills and the intrinsic satisfaction that derived from their exercise, another series of marketing decisions funneled a major part of this tremendously increased industrial capacity into the production and circulation of new consumer goods and services, or an unprecedented array of standardized *things* and *experiences*, that the worker as consumer might acquire with the fatter pay packet he earned from renting out his productive time and energy to the producers of things and the providers of experiences. As such a consumeristic *rentier*, the objective position of the proletarian within the means of production, shifted from the *primacy of production* to the *primacy of consumption*. Instead of being most productive through undaunting hard work on company time in the workplace, the technologically intensified means of production now basically transformed the *worker as a productive force* into the *consumer as productive force*, who becomes most productive through unending intense leisure on off-time in the living place. In many respects, the aversion to work and the trend toward "anti-work" represent the obverse of corporate capitalism's real dynamic of inculcating a passion for play and a movement towards "pro-leisure."

The systemic development of "anti-work" attitudes and activities, then, closely parallels the systematic emergence of "pro-leisure" values and practices throughout the economy, at least since the end of World War II, if not before. Corporate capital has invested leisure with immense importance in order to integrate the workers into the affluent society by training them to "work" *hard* "at play." Private time, personal pursuits, leisure time are culturally redefined constantly as self-actualizing moments to be aggressively sought after and wantonly spent upon. The personal car, the private home, the individual electronics system, the single-family accessories of backyard fun are all "worked for" and "worked on" as new forms of play. Zerzan mistakes the latest outbreaks of anti-work activities as the rebellion of a militant and skilled working class chafing to expropriate the capitalists. In fact, since corporate capital has so comfortably transformed "play" into "work," it now can seek final closure by artfully transfiguring even those final hours of worktime in the factory and office into activity forms that more closely resemble playtime and leisure. The new waves of industrial sociologists and managerial psychologists that are now pitching out plans for "job excitement," "job enhancement," and "job enrichment" see this underlying need to transform work into something more like play. Hence, the advent of exercise programs on company time, the elimination of routine tasks, the introduction of variety, diversity and mystery in job assignments, the formation of structured bull sessions and gossip circles to improve "productivity," or the creation of innumerable new little sub-managerial niches on the line or in the office so everyone can pretend he is boss or play assistant vice-president.

The civic privatism that Zerzan now concludes will bring the system into its final crisis is instead the proper, correct form of psychosocial behavior required by advanced corporate capital to maintain its control over the worker, who now is *only* a

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producer as a consumer. The worker as producer can be replaced by a robotic-cybernetic servomechanism. Thus, only as a consumer, who is properly socialized to spend his *rentier* income on the unending flow of technologically generated things and experiences, does the worker have a function and importance in corporate capital's designs. The larger culture of withdrawal, as Zerzan complains, is simply the social form of "pro-leisure" that remains once everyone has been mobilized by primetime TV ads to rush out to the closest shopping mall to hunt for and gather the correct things that they can then fully experience and enjoy in the privacy of their homes, unbothered by political issues, union meetings, religious obligations, neighborhood community, family ties, or the hassles at work. Workers are absent from work to stay at home to play "Space Invaders" or are tardy because they have to watch all of "Hour Magazine" to start the day, or are doped up on the job because working is not as much fun as lying around the pool at home, or are disabled on the job because they are daydreaming about cruising around on their dirt bikes — not because they are gathering their energies for the final confrontation with capital.

Indeed, as the pollsters and evening news broadcasters continually report, many if not most workers believe that the only way they will improve their lives is through the government granting free license, tax breaks and new capital to the corporations that rent their time in factories and offices. Of course, the workers loathe their corporate tenants who rent their hours and the corporations themselves moan about the utility of the units they rent. Nonetheless, what might, at first glance, appear to be indicators of social unrest are in fact, solid signs of social integration and civic passivity. The next time that Zerzan climbs behind the wheel of social theory to take it on a spin through contemporary social trends, let us hope that he drives along looking through the windshield at events of the 1980s that are going on ahead of him, rather than staring into the rearview mirror of working-class politics in the 1880s.

## MARX'S ESCHATOLOGY

### by Donna Hardway

Marx wasn't interested in economics. However, in his day, you couldn't get anything published on the subject he was really interested in — sex. So everything he wrote was allegorical. This goes a long way to explain why so many scholars have been preoccupied with this obscure body of work and, in particular, with those predictions that did not stand up.

Marx's writings are all about his troubled sex life: his deep-seated fears of inadequacy and of perversion. It should not be surprising that Marx had problems in this area. He was a wino and had carbuncles to boot, which did not put him in the best position for normal functioning.

How are Marx's fears expressed? He worried that the workers would fail to remain in the arisen state: "This organization of the proletarians...is continually being upset.... But it ever rises up again, stronger, firmer, mightier." He had particular doubts about the potency of philosophers. They tend "to talk about it" and never "do it." Above all, he was fixated on the idea that once capitalism had reached its "highest

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point" it would immediately "collapse," having "sown the seeds" of its own destruction. He resented the "surplus value" being extracted from the workers, believing they should have the means of (re)production in their "own hands." Capitalism appeared so strong from the outside, yet underneath, that "falling rate of profit" constantly threatened.

Now we can see why scholars are so fascinated with Marx's *miscalculations*. How has capitalism managed to hold out so long, neither collapsing nor petering out? Marx's disciples have pointed the finger to the exotic East, where all sorts of devices and processes have been invented for prolonging and rejuvenating aging systems. Exporting capitalism makes it last longer, they contend. Still, the scholars are worried about the falling rate of profit even in those areas.

Marx thought he could learn the secrets of those bohemian swingers, the Paris Commune, but he knew that if he remained in England no one would notice his problem.

We are now in a position to uncover the whole corpus of Marxism. The Early Manuscripts evidence infantile fears concerning anality: "The worker puts his life into the object, and his life then belongs no longer to him but to the object. The greater his activity, therefore, the less he possesses.... The *alienation* of the worker in his product means...that it exists outside him." The mystery of alienation becomes crystal clear. Only angels do not experience alienation, and we are not so sure about them.

Marx never surmounted his castration anxiety: "the monstrous objective power which social labor itself erected opposite itself...belongs not to the worker,...but... to capital" (*Grundrisse*). His Oedipal stage presented difficulties as he had a traumatic experience. The bourgeoisie (i.e., his father) stripped away the sentimental veil that clothed the family (i.e., his mother's clothes).

Marx does not talk much about his utopia — it was unspeakable. However, like Plato's, it was to be a homosexual paradise. Now we can understand what he was implying when he said: "The bourgeoisie have already established a community of women." The communists would establish a community of *men*.

Marx's preoccupation with chains, fetters, bondage and little children lashed to machines can be attributed to his long residence in England. Naturally, the "revolution" would be more "glorious" having surmounted these restraints.

In his old age, Marx kept remembering the shop windows of Soho and for a long period he could think only about fetishes. He considered himself a misfit, and claimed that there was a contradiction between the "productive forces" and the mode of intercourse. His premature death left his major work unfinished.

Will the revolution ever come? Will the class struggle be resolved with the proletariat coming out on top? Will the well springs of creativity finally flow? Will people ever be able to hunt in the morning and peck in the afternoon? Nobody knows, but one thing is for sure: people with certain kinds of minds will always be preoccupied with these questions.

*Epilog*

Freud wasn't interested in sex. But the people in his day did not want to hear another word about the class struggle. The only way you could get your books published was to fill them with sex, sex, sex. Freud did write about the class struggle, but he had to disguise it. When he said that the id was threatening to rise up and engulf the ego and superego, what he meant was that the working class was organizing to overcome the bourgeoisie (ego) and aristocracy (superego)...

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# Reviews:

G.L. Ulmen. *The Science of Society: Toward an Understanding of the Life and Work of Karl August Wittfogel.* Mouton Publishers, 1978. xxviii plus 747pages. $103 hardbound.

In this "experiment in social science criticism" (p. 6), there is plenty of criticism, but all of it is directed at Wittfogel's enemies. Even granting Ulmen's claim that "Wittfogel has made the greatest contribution to the science of society since Max Weber" (p. vi), it does not justify the absence of any discussion of problems in his teacher's thought. Of course, Wittfogel has often been misunderstood and sometimes ignored by those who should have known better, but Ulmen writes as if Wittfogel's supporters have been consistently motivated by the quest for truth, while his critics have always acted out of antagonistic political or personal motives. Thus, because of its uncritical style, *The Science of Society* loses its concrete subject. In Wittfogel's place we have the image of a saint, with gnostic understanding, persecuted by demonic forces.

Though wrecked by its partisan style, this study deserves attention because it is extremely rich in information about a neglected topic. Wittfogel's writings have often been dismissed by both Western Marxists (as positivist and vulgar materialist) and Eastern Marxists (as revisionist and reactionary). Ulmen's work describes Wittfogel's extensive studies, connects them to their biographical context — e.g., his participation in the Communist Party, confinement in Nazi concentration camps, and activity in Cold War America — and, in the process, argues that the configuration of ideas escapes simple labels. It is an important and interesting story, poorly told.

Ulmen (p. 108) traces "the root of Wittfogelianism" to a synthesis of Marx and Weber. From Marx comes a totalizing perspective toward economy and society and a materialist epistemology that emphasizes the social system of production as a "determining" substratum, providing constraints and structuring opportunities that establish determinate boundaries for the social formation's development. Wittfogel adopted Marx's theory of history, but revised it, placing less emphasis on the social elements in the mode of production. Marx gave primacy to forces of production, but these included labor power and modes of cooperation as well as material means of production. Wittfogel argues that Marx insisted that the material means (particularly tools) "are the developmentally decisive factor" (p. 94). Though some of his statements could be construed to support this interpretation, Marx's historical materialism did not carry such strong emphasis on the material factor.[1] Wittfogel not only stresses tools, but

1. There has been a renewal of interest in Marx's theory of history. Among the many books on the topic that have appeared recently are Barry Hindess and Paul Hirst, *Mode of Production and Social Formation* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J., 1977); *Pre-Capitalist Modes of Production* (London, 1975); D. Ross Gandy, *Marx and History* (Austin, Texas, 1979); John McMurtry, *The Structure of Marx's World-View* (Princeton, N.J., 1978); Melvin Rader, *Marx's Interpretation of History* (New York, 1979); William H. Shaw, *Marx's Theory of History* (Stanford, Calif., 1978). For a comprehensive collection of essays explicitly on the Asiatic mode, see Anne Bailey and Josep R. Llobera, *The Asiatic Mode of Production* (London, 1981). Also see pp. 3-106 in G.L. Ulmen, *Society and History* (The Hague, 1978). The general works on historical materialism do not interpret productive forces in Wittfogel's extreme materialist fashion, and none stresses the natural factor (although some recognize it, for example, Gandy, *op.cit.*, pp. 123-126). Shaw, *op.cit.*, pp. 1-82, who labels Marx's approach as "technological determinism" and who does not include modes of cooperation in the forces of production, comes closest to an extreme materialist position. However, even he (pp. 149-168) recognizes that Marx's application of his approach to historical cases did not emphasize consistently the technological factor. Despite differences of interpretation, these works share with Wittfogel the view that historical materialism can be a useful tool for analyzing social formations. Furthermore, like Wittfogel, some of these works approach Marx critically, pointing to shortcomings in his theory of history and criticizing his historical analyses (particularly important is the criticism of the substantive modes of production

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also their relation to natural (or ecological) conditions (p. 96). He considers " 'naturally conditioned powers of production' . . . as important as and sometimes more important than the 'socially conditioned powers of production' " (p. 43). This emphasis on the material factor, and especially natural conditions, is evident in all of Wittfogel's substantive analyses. His "hydraulic" hypothesis focuses on the technical consequences of certain geographical and climatic conditions (those requiring irrigation or flood control) as fundamental (although not sole) determinants of Asiatic despotism. Clearly, when both substantive and conceptual aspects of their work are considered, Wittfogel's historical materialism stresses material conditions far more than does Marx's.[2]

From Weber, Wittfogel gained an appreciation of bureaucracy and power (beyond that based on property relations). It is crucial to stress, as Ulmen does (pp. 36-38), that the agreement with Weber was substantive, not methodological. Weber rejected both totalizing approaches to history and the idea that history has meaning. Furthermore, his concept of value-freedom and emphasis on "the ethic of responsibility" checkmated any tendency to provide ultimate solutions to the problem of history. Thus, unlike Wittfogel and Marx, Weber did not advocate "revolutionary science." In his early work, Wittfogel attacked Weber's neo-Kantian approach as "scientific nihilism."

Wittfogel's synthesis of Marx and Weber culminates in a position that is neither fully Marxian nor Weberian, but Wittfogelian. Marx is the more important influence because his work shaped Wittfogel's epistemology and method of analysis. Yet Weber is also crucial, because his critical approach to bureaucratic domination raised Wittfogel's doubts about the Communist Party's aims. In fact, while he was still a Marxist, Wittfogel argued that, in Asiatic society, bureaucratic officials constituted a ruling group who held broad and arbitrary powers and controlled the production of surplus product. Soviet ideologists attacked Wittfogel's position because it reflected critically on both Soviet bureaucracy and its "revolutionary" goals in Asia. When he refused to change his views he was politically marginalized. This led to a final break with Marxist politics, after which Wittfogel became increasingly more critical of Marx's theories. In his later work, he argued that Marx "committed a 'sin against science' " (p. 302) because he failed to identify a ruling class in the Asiatic mode of production.[3] Also,

— primitive communism, ancient mode, Asiatic mode, etc. — as progressive stages of history). See, for example, Shaw, *op.cit.*, pp. 83-148.

2. See Engels, "To Joseph Bloch," in Tucker, *The Marx-Engels Reader* (New York, 1978), p. 762. In criticizing both Marxist and non-Marxist distortions of historical materialism, Engels states that "Marx and I are ourselves partly to blame for the fact that the younger people sometimes lay more stress on the economic side than is due to it. We had to emphasize the main principle *vis-à-vis* our adversaries, who denied it, and we had not always the time, the place or the opportunity to allow the other elements involved in the interaction to come into their rights. But when it was a case of presenting a section of history, that is, the practical application, it was a different matter and there no error was possible." In this letter Engels stresses that Marx's (and his own) substantive analyses emphasized strongly the role of social and ideological factors in the course of history. In Marx's framework material forces act primarily as a substratum that makes a range of social phenomena possible, but does not narrowly determine them. Even the economic factor, when emphasized, stresses primarily property relations (social relations of production), not material forces of production or even modes of cooperation. Thus, there are firm grounds to argue that Marx's and Wittfogel's historical materialism differ sharply with respect to their relative emphases on material conditions and natural factors.

3. In *Oriental Despotism* (New York, 1981), p. 387, Wittfogel is unfair to Marx. He argues that "As a member of a group that intended to establish a total managerial and dictatorial state and was ready to use 'despotic measures' to achieve its socialist ends, Marx could scarcely help recognizing some disturbing similarities between Oriental despotism and the state of his program." This is the kind of presumptuous and uncharitable interpretation that Ulmen argues is characteristic of the style of Wittfogel's critics. As more reasonable interpretations point out

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Wittfogel elaborated further his thesis about Asiatic despotism and extended it into a direct and bitter critique of the Soviet Union. He believed that "Communist totalitarianism" had roots in Russia's oriental despotic past, and that the Soviet bureaucracy is even more oppressive than that of ancient Asiatic societies because of the extremely centralized powers and rationalized controls of its "modern industrial apparatus state" (p. 365). The important point, and one demonstrated by Ulmen, is that Wittfogel's break with Marxism was not sudden, nor caused exclusively by political conditions (although issues like the Nazi-Soviet accord certainly had an impact). The seeds of the break were immanent in his early Weberian concern about bureaucratic domination.

But the political break with Marxism did not make Wittfogel a Weberian. Though, in his later work, Wittfogel "strongly modifies Marx's concepts of the powers of production and the relations of production" (p. 359), he does not completely abandon Marx's approach to science and history. In this respect, despite its anti-Soviet thrust, *Oriental Despotism* continues to have determinate connections to Wittfogel's Marxist period. Its totalizing, materialist methodology, commitment to specific values and implicit call for struggle have roots in Marxist rather than Weberian social science. Furthermore, Ulmen (p. 366) refers to *Oriental Despotism* as "more than Wittfogel's *Capital*, it is his *Manifesto*." Wittfogel abandoned Marxist politics, but the political theme in his work remained strong; it simply was transformed into passionate anti-communism.[4] His later work manifests an "ethic of conviction" that stands in contradiction to Weber's concept of science. Though Ulmen is careful not to cast Wittfogel as a Weberian, he does not detail thoroughly enough the extent of their differences.

Ulmen (pp. 132-133, 471-472) discusses the emergence of "dialectical materialism," which he distinguishes sharply from Marx's "historical materialism," as the epistemological foundation of official Marxism under the nascent Soviet state. This development changed the central categories from society and history to theory and practice, and transformed Marxist scholarship from a sociological activity into a "philosophical" enterprise. Wittfogel's "science of society" was based on historical materialism and it was his commitment to this approach that hastened his split from the Communist Party. The Soviet move to philosophy, which was a turning away from

(see, e.g., Shaw, *op.cit.*, pp. 114-148), Marx's discussions of the Asiatic mode, as well as those focusing on the other substantive modes of production, are flawed and incomplete. Marx's primary project was the analysis of capitalism, and his discussions of pre-capitalist systems were subordinate elements in this broader project. Therefore, Marx did not work out many of the difficult problems associated with them. This fact, rather than a vision of the future development of the bureaucratic domination of the Soviet state, accounts for his incomplete analysis of the Asiatic mode of production. Wittfogel tends to portray Marx as operating in good faith when Marx's conclusions agree with his own, while Marx is described as "sinning against science" when they are in disagreement. See Anne Bailey and Joseph R. Llobera, "Karl A. Wittfogel and the Asiatic Mode of Production: A Reappraisal," *Sociological Review*, 27 (August 1979), p. 548. Hindess and Hirst, *op.cit.*, p. 218, claim that Wittfogel distorts Marx's emphasis on public works, arguing that he never adopted Wittfogel's "technicist 'hydraulic society' thesis." Thus, they argue, Wittfogel's claim that Marx's later positions constitute "a 'retreat from truth' " is false.

4. One has only to read the concluding pages of *Oriental Despotism* to realize that this work has to be seen as a passionate polemic as well as an impressive piece of scholarship. In these pages Wittfogel warns of the possible peril of the West if it fails to confront communist "bureaucratic state slavery" and to "risk . . . alliance against the total enemy." Furthermore, he argues that the chances of a slide into despotism and the eclipse of "multicentered society" are increased if "Big Business," "Big Agriculture" or "Big Labor" is threatened. All of these arguments were pregnant with political meaning and constituted an especially powerful message (whatever Wittfogel's intention) in the Cold War days of 1957 when *Oriental Despotism* first was published.

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history and empirical inquiry, hitched materialism firmly to the state apparatus. Now it became the duty of Soviet intellectuals, more clearly than ever, to promote the success of Party policies rather than the accurate and critical interpretation of history. Because it stressed the necessary liquidation of history that contradicts party ideology, dialectical materialism injected an idealist element into official Marxism. Such a position not only legitimates, but commands acts of intellectual "bad faith." In contrast, historical materialism embraces scientific and scholarly ends rather than political ones. Ulmen's analysis would have been stronger had he explained how the empirical understanding of society and history, fostered by such an approach, can become the basis of immanent critique.[5] The Stalinist bureaucracy forbade such empirical analysis of Soviet society because it would have revealed sharp contradictions between its socio-political structure and its socialist ideology.

Ironically, Western Marxists, particularly the Frankfurt School, "also turned to philosophy, paralleling the radical transformation of [official] Marxism" (p. 133). Though this turn was a response to empiricist reification of bourgeois society rather than a reflection of the desire to maintain a party line, it tended to delegitimize historical materialist analysis. Afterwards, concepts such as mode of production, surplus product, etc., were relegated increasingly to the scrap heal of vulgar Marxism.[6] By retaining his historical materialist position, Wittfogel was not only removed from official Marxist circles, but became an outsider to Western Marxists. There are two points: first, Wittfogel's course away from Marxism has to be understood in the context of his maverick position that was well established in the early 1930s when he was still formally a Marxist;[7] second, despite the fact that he eventually completely rejected Marxist politics, he demonstrated that historical materialism, when linked with Weberian themes, can be the basis for a powerful critique of bureaucratic centralism. He never really abandoned this position. Ulmen (p. 211) explains that Wittfogel was an outsider to Critical Theory, not only because of his empirical bent, but also because of his broad systematic approach. Today, Wittfogel's macroscopic method provides the means for a broad, comparative analysis that is lacking in critical theory. Such a tool, which adds an important global, historical dimension to the critique of domination, should not be arbitrarily rejected because of its alleged tie to orthodox Marxism.

Wittfogel has sometimes been accused of vulgar positivism. Actually, his approach, which insists that "facts are not history" (pp. 191, 211, 231, 367-368), rejects positivism. Wittfogel's critique of historiography is similar to the *Annales* school's attack on "event history." Like Wittfogel, Marc Bloch, Fernand Braudel and other *Annales* scholars argue

5. Cf. Konrad and Szelenyi, *The Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power* (New York, 1979), pp. 243-247, where they recognize the possible threatening nature of empirical sociology in state socialist regimes that control rigidly the production of knowledge and information. On p. 245, they explain that when Eastern European social scientists, "rigorously applying methods of research generally accepted as legitimate, began to arrive at a critique of ideology, or even made ideological goals themselves the subject of empirical study," they threatened the power of the state planning elite. In the 1960s, reacting to these dangers, the elite attacked empirical social research and marginalized some empirical sociologists.

6. It is important to note that this is not the case for all Western Marxists. For example, Konrad and Szelenyi, though they are certainly not orthodox historical materialists, continue to emphasize the control over surplus product. Also, on pp. 241-243, they suggest that neo-Marxist philosophical critiques can be transformed by state socialist elites into "immanent apologetics."

7. Ulmen, pp. 132-133, points out that the dialectical materialist orientation of Soviet Marxism was established officially by Soviet philosophers and scientists at two international meetings in 1931. This was the same year that Max Horkheimer became director of the Frankfurt Institute of Social Research, establishing at the institute the dominance of philosophical Marxism over historical-empirical methods.

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that analysis of society must reach beyond facts toward totalities. For this school, historical facts must be understood in the context of broader social configurations and especially historical formations. Wittfogel's totalizing perspective locates him outside the realm of positivist historical analysis. Crude positivism is characterized by nominalism that views concepts, such as Oriental despotism, as sociological fictions that, in principle, cannot be historically grounded. Indeed, Wittfogel probably received as much faulty criticism from crude positivists, who were incapable of grasping the meaning and utility of sociological concepts, as he did from those who rejected his approach (incorrectly) for being positivist. Wittfogel's extreme, naturalistic materialism, whatever its limitations, does not make him a positivist. Instead, he can more accurately be located in the tradition of totalizing classical thinkers (such as Hegel and Marx) who rejected the neo-Kantian aversion to speaking about historical systems (p. 211).

Shifting from methodological to substantive issues, in *Oriental Despotism* Wittfogel[8] speaks of "the need for a new sociology of class" that extends beyond the property-based theories of 19th-century thought. As previously mentioned, he believed that ruling class membership, in Asiatic systems, is founded on position in the bureaucratic hierarchy. This elite includes the ruler, the court, high officials and, to a lesser degree, underlings occupying lower bureaucratic offices. Wittfogel's position contradicts Marx's claim that the central dynamic in history is (property-based) class struggle. According to Wittfogel, Asiatic systems, because of their bureaucratic ruling class, are "self-perpetuating" and are not brought down by class struggle or by other internal contradictions (p. 365).

Even in his early work, Wittfogel argued that the power position of Oriental bureaucracy prevents the rise of more progressive social formations (p. 40). The Soviets and many other orthodox Marxists accepted as doctrine Marx's claims that his sequential, substantive modes of production constituted necessary, progressive, historical stages. Thus, communism could develop in Russia and China only after feudalism and, at least, a brief period of limited capitalism. The Soviets were concerned about Lenin's assertion "that the next Russian revolution, instead of initiating a socialist society, might lead to an 'Asiatic restoration.' "[9] Wittfogel argues that Soviet communism constitutes just such a restoration. Moreover, he portrays its bureaucracy as having "total control over agriculture and industry, social life and ideas," creating a "total managerial society" as opposed to the "semi-managerial" structure of ancient Asiatic systems (p. 365). Wittfogel claims that communist bureaucracy wields total power, uses total terror and violence, creates total loneliness and fosters total alienation (p. 366).

Naturally, the Soviets put their ideological apparatus into high gear and totally rejected Wittfogel's claims about Oriental despotism and its restoration. Ulmen discusses the predictable Marxist attacks on Wittfogel in a long chapter (pp. 388-443) and in many other places throughout the text. Much of this discussion details communist machinations that were intended to undermine and publicly discredit Wittfogel's arguments. Orthodox Marxists in Western Europe also mounted polemical attacks against him; e.g., the publisher of the French edition of *Oriental Despotism,* without Wittfogel's permission, added a vitriolic preface by a radical Marxist historian. Though Ulmen's criticism of the politically inspired attacks is well aimed, it

8. Wittfogel, *op.cit.*, pp. 301-368.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7. However, according to Wittfogel, Lenin dropped this concern when the chances for seizing power increased during World War I.

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carries few surprises. Furthermore, it is troubling that the exclusive focus is on the political aspect of the Marxist critique. Ulmen's presentation, which omits serious discussion of any of the empirical and theoretical issues implied in the critiques, fails to distinguish the more scholarly Marxist critics from the completely political ones. This ignores possible substantive issues and dismisses debate over them. Wittfogel's claims about the total power and irreversibility of communist bureaucracy, as well as his assertions about its historical determinants, rest on historical and empirical claims that deserve critical discussion.

Ulmen's failure to provide detailed analyses of non-Marxist criticisms of Wittfogel, some of which were supportive of certain dimensions of the Marxist critiques, further weakens the book. In one of his longer "critical" commentaries, he provides about one and a half pages (pp. 298-300) of discussion of Wolfram Eberhard's criticism. Ulmen not only fails to present the details of a very important intellectual exchange, but also attempts to discredit Eberhard by implying that the attack was a response to Wittfogel's testimony before the McCarran Committee and to his earlier negative review of Eberhard's book. After a brief comment on how Eberhard distorted Wittfogel's ideas, Ulmen claims that "personal antagonism warped scholarly analysis" (p. 300). Ulmen (pp. 321-323) presents extremely laudatory statements from a series of positive reviews of *Oriental Despotism,* then adds that "There were, of course, hostile reviews for both personal and political reasons." These unfavorable reviews are not further elaborated.

Eberhard's review of *Oriental Despotism* raised theoretical as well as empirical problems.[10] For example, he suggested that the theoretical model of Oriental society is crude, that "despotism" is not clearly defined and that the model is not given sufficient historical support. Eberhard also criticized Wittfogel's treatment of critics, asserting that he treated scholars "who have brought to light new information and accordingly have changed their theories for reasons other than a mere change in the party line" similar to those who altered their views for political reasons.[11]

In another section, Ulmen (pp. 395-396) mentions briefly an exchange in *Slavic Review* concerning the application of Wittfogel's theories to Russia. He provides no substantive discussion except to stress the authority of the person who supported Wittfogel's thesis. On the other hand, his comments on the dissenting scholar stress Wittfogel's assertion that he lacked "a positive attitude...toward the feasibility of cooperation between representatives of various disciplines" (p. 396). It is true that Riasanovsky (the critic) questioned Wittfogel's competence in Russian history.[12] However, he did so while posing reasonable questions about Wittfogel's theory and arguing that Wittfogel failed to take account of competing and more adequate explanations of Russian history. When applied to Russia, the theory of Oriental society substitutes a "mongol bacillus" theory for a determinate, historical explanation

10. Wolfram Eberhard, "Oriental Despotism: Political Weapon or Sociological Concept," in Anne M. Bailey and Josep R. Llobera, *op.cit.*, pp. 177-181.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 177. Thus, for example, Eisenstadt's review (also mentioned by Ulmen) opens with a positive discussion of Wittfogel's contribution, provides a lengthy, dispassionate description of the work and concludes with a non-Marxist critique. Eisenstadt charges Wittfogel with failing to respond to Eberhard's criticism adequately, overemphasizing coercion and having a naive understanding of the state. The review certainly did not ring with political or personal animosity! Cf. S.N. Eisenstadt, "The Study of Oriental Despotisms as Systems of Total Power," *Journal of Asian Studies*, 17 (May 1978).

12. Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, "Oriental Despotism and Russia," in *Slavic Review*, 22 (December 1963).

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of Russian autocracy and despotism.[13] The burden of proof is on Wittfogel to provide evidence that these conditions have their origins in the Mongol conquest. Riasanovsky concluded that the majority of historiographical research contradicts Wittfogel's theory. Instead of having dismissed it, Ulmen should have dealt with such a criticism.

This does not mean that Wittfogel's critics are correct and his theories wrong. The point is that Ulmen's scant mention of scholarly criticism and frequent references to critics' personal and political animosities implies that their "criticism" is based on bad faith. On the other hand, those who support Wittfogel's ideas are portrayed as working in the cause of truth (e.g., Rudi Dutschke, who agrees with crucial elements of Wittfogel's analysis of the Soviet Union, is said not to "shrink from the most controversial and devastating ideas" — p. 429 — and that he has written an "extraordinary book — the most important investigation undertaken by a member of the New Left" — p. 430). In discussion the use of Wittfogel's "hydraulic" thesis in "New World archaeology," Ulmen suggests that it was a primary stimulus of "the *spectacular* spread of the materialist interpretation of cultural evolution" (p. 489 — my emphasis). Though he states generously that "the hydraulic concept has not been *universally* accepted" (p. 494 — my emphasis), he argues that even the negative responses in many cases recognize "the parochial approach of many anthropologists" and that the "positive response. . . continues to grow" (p. 495). Substantive disagreements are not analyzed and the body of literature that casts doubt on the theory is not described.[14] Overall, Ulmen attempts to stress the validity of Wittfogel's ideas, demonstrate that fair-minded and rigorous scholars accept them and emphasize that all criticism has been misdirected. Critics are placed in two categories: those who attacked Wittfogel because of political differences, and those who personally disliked him and used his political vulnerability to discredit or repress his scholarship. As such, the book shares the one dimensionality of the mechanistic Marxist literature that Ulmen attacks.

Ulmen is even less critical in his discussion of the Cold War period. He describes Wittfogel as "one of the chief victims of the McCarthy era" (p. 474) and as a "prophet without honor in his own country" (p. 303). This occurred because of his testimony before the McCarran Committee, which was investigating "communist infiltration" of the Institute of Pacific Relations. The institute, with which Wittfogel had been

13. Wittfogel argues that the historical seed of Oriental despotism originates in the need to develop centralized organization to manage large-scale irrigation and flood control systems. This hydraulic theory becomes extremely broad and complex because societies are then categorized as core (divided further into compact and loose, and then into four further subdivisions), marginal, and submarginal categories. The despotism of the core areas originates in their centralized waterworks, while that of the marginal and submarginal areas develops from their political, military and social connections to the core. In the case of Russia, the Mongols, a non-agricultural people, lived on the margins of hydraulic China, adopted their despotic ways, and then transmitted it to the Russians during the Mongol conquest (see Ulmen, pp. 361-362). Wittfogel's critics have reacted to a perceived vagueness and generality of the theory. They point to a lack of determinate historical explanation, e.g., that the concrete and specific structures, through which despotism was transmitted (between Mongol society and contemporary Soviet bureaucracy), are not spelled out clearly, nor are other potentially confounding historical and contemporary conditions properly taken into account. This issue is central not only to the Riasanovsky review, but also to those of Eberhard and Eisenstadt. Ulmen does not confront this issue in any detail.

14. William P. Mitchell, in "The Hydraulic Hypothesis: A Reappraisal," in *Current Anthropology*, 14 (December 1973), reviews the anthropological literature and suggests that the hydraulic hypothesis "should not be discarded on the basis of the criticisms that so far have been directed against it" (p. 534). However, the paper also points to much contradictory research and concludes that the findings suggest that irrigation is only one factor among many that stimulate bureaucratic centralization.

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affiliated, was a loose organization of (mostly liberal) Asian scholars who sometimes advised the U.S. government on Far East policy. Wittfogel gave damaging testimony about Owen Lattimore and several other institute scholars, as well as implicating, in the international communist movement, certain other people not connected with the institute (e.g., Moses Finley). Ulmen portrays the predictably strong, negative reaction of the liberal community as a "witch-hunt against Wittfogel" (p. 304). The details of this so-called witch-hunt are unclear, except that Ulmen points out that few students registered for his classes, he failed to receive applause after a colloquium, and he was shunned by many liberal acquaintances (pp. 303-304). Without diminishing here the pain of rejection, it seems odd to portray as a witch-hunt the predicament of someone who sided with the witch-prickers. This entire section of Ulmen's book is awful. Ulmen portrays Wittfogel as an unwilling participant who "did not volunteer information and under subpoena did not go out of his way to make incriminating statements" and then argues, on the basis of this claim, that this "is proof of his reluctance to combat Communism on any but a scholarly level." Allegedly, Wittfogel simply told the truth, followed his "obligations as a citizen" and "chose not to protect those who... dealt dishonestly with him" (p. 291).

That Wittfogel was not a willing participant is contradicted by the tone of the hearing transcripts — even the very sections Ulmen quotes. True, he was subpoenaed, also true, he would not have chosen to testify in open session if he had not been forced to do so, and true, his testimony probably reflected his perception of the truth. Despite all this, it is clear (at least according to my reading of the transcripts) that Wittfogel's testimony was quite enthusiastic; he responded like someone who believed in the purpose of the hearings and was willing to contribute to that purpose. This meant that he did not restrict the information he provided to limited, literal, factual responses to questions. When permitted, he expounded extensively his own views about the struggle against communism and about the dangers that some of the people under investigation posed to a society engaged in that struggle (p. 294). His testimony about their communist sympathies was sometimes based on his assumptions about their friends, general attitude, and behavior.[15] Ulmen implies that Wittfogel exhibited restraint in his testimony about Lattimore, even though Wittfogel asserted that a "pro-Soviet pattern had developed" in Lattimore's "ideological attitude" (p. 289) and that Lattimore applied the concept of "feudal survivals," which was a "cover term," reflecting the communist line.[16] At times, Wittfogel also interpreted Lattimore's gestures and suggested that there were obvious meanings behind them.[17] Ulmen's discussion of Wittfogel's testimony is naive and formalist. He argues that the liberal response was unfair because Wittfogel had no choice about testifying, that he requested to make a statement against witch-hunting but was refused permission by

15. See *Hearings Before the Subcommittee to Investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and Other Internal Security Laws of the Committee on the Judiciary of the United States Senate, First Session on the Institute of Pacific Relations*, Part I (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1951), pp. 339-341. See Wittfogel's testimony about Michael Greenberg (*ibid.*, p. 280) and Harriet Moore (p. 291). The point is *not* that Wittfogel was always wildly speculative, but that some of his labeling of communists was based on interpretations of behavior and situations rather than direct knowledge. An unwilling yet truthful participant in the hearings would have been much more conservative in these responses, restricting damaging testimony to those instances involving direct knowledge.

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 334-335.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 290. Here, Wittfogel discusses the relationship of a "nice smile" of Lattimore's to a set of understandings about Wittfogel's status as a Communist. Wittfogel insisted that, despite his "No" response to a question about his communist status, Lattimore knew otherwise and that the smile expressed an understanding.

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the committee, and that he was simply truthful. Wittfogel did, however, cooperate.

Wittfogel must have been sophisticated enough to understand the significance of his testimony at the McCarran hearings. He broke rank with the majority of scholars who viewed the hearings as a repressive extension of Cold War paranoia. His actions and statements before the committee went far beyond formal compliance and, in so doing, upheld the validity of the hearings. He expressed freely his own political and intellectual position, stressing monolithic communism's extreme and imminent dangers, its clandestine tactics and the contribution of the Left (particularly that of alleged Leftists at the Institute of Pacific Relations) to the advancement of international communism. Along with the minority of other scholars who sympathized with the interrogators, Wittfogel consecrated the vague accusations of the Far Right with intellectual legitimacy. His apparent enthusiasm for the process is revealed in his lengthy rebuttal of Lattimore's testimony in a freely submitted letter that was included in the record of the McCarran hearings. Ulmen (p. 294) quotes its conclusion: "As far as I can judge, the Lattimore of 1952 is not the Lattimore of the '30s. . . although his behavior during that decade, as recent investigations have disclosed, shows him already willing in the '30s to take the course that he has followed ruthlessly since. Realizing how Lattimore's special and unusual talents were increasingly furthering the aims of total power, we should examine more than this single man, who without doubt did great harm to the free world. We should study the entire political nexus that encourages the Lattimores, for the world that admires Lattimores is disastrously related to the world that breeds them." Is this what Ulmen (p. 291) means when he states that Wittfogel "did not go out of his way to make incriminating statements" and is this a "sign of his reluctance to combat Communism on any but a scholarly level"?

Ulmen, who consistently attributes political motives to Lattimore, sees Wittfogel's behavior as reflecting only the most pristine values. He quotes Aristotle (p. 291) to describe Wittfogel's "feelings at the time": " 'piety requires us to honor truth above our friends.' " But this is an absurd twist of Aristotle's statement. Ulmen previously implied that Wittfogel and Lattimore were competitors, long before the hearings began. Certainly, there was nothing in Wittfogel's testimony that indicated it was painful for him to provide the information he did. Furthermore, Ulmen never considers possible resentful motives that might have effected Wittfogel's words and actions. For example, he does not examine the implications of either the fact that the State Department accepted Lattimore's and not Wittfogel's policy positions or their ensuing and acrimonious split that occurred in 1947.

In attempting to separate the McCarran hearings from McCarthyism ("McCarran is not McCarthy" — p. 278), Ulmen (p. 279) relies almost entirely on a book " 'initiated. . . as a public service' [?!] by the American Committee for Cultural Freedom" — an anti-Communist group to which Wittfogel belonged.[18] This source states that the McCarran Committee operated objectively and fairly, finding Lattimore "a fellow-traveler of long standing," a "clever apologist for the Soviet Union, a faithful propagandist and follower of the Party line." However, Ulmen (p. 280) argues that "they [the authors] were obviously criticizing McCarthy" because they asserted that this did not make Lattimore a spy (as McCarthy had accused). Ulmen fails to discuss other sources, and does not mention the political philosophy of the

18. James Rorty and Moseh Decter, *McCarthy and the Communists* (Boston, 1954). In "The Cultural Cold War: Short History of the Congress for Cultural Freedom," Christopher Lasch has described the tactics of this right-wing organization and discussed its possible connections to the Central Intelligence Agency. That essay appears in Barton J. Bernstein, ed., *Towards a New Past* (New York, 1968).

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members of the committee, which ranged between conservative and reactionary.[19] As Thomas writes, "What emerges most strikingly from these hearings...is the stark disparity between the committee's claims to fair play and the proceedings themselves."[20] He goes on to argue that the committee "breached its own standards" by "the use of biased or leading questions," by applying "differing requirements placed upon different witnesses," and by the "interruption of witnesses in the middle of their responses." Those who spoke in support of the Institute for Pacific Relations were harassed, interrupted and forced to substantiate factually every claim, while those who spoke critically "were allowed considerable latitude in presenting their views."[21] Wittfogel's appearance before the committee was marked by warmth, respect and even deference from the committee members. He was given time to express his views (which he did at length), his claims were not challenged and at the close of his testimony a list of praises about his work, from prominent scholars, was read into the record. This type of treatment was certainly not repeated for those who countered the Wittfogelian position before the committee.[22]

There are problems with Ulmen's book beyond the substantive ones already discussed. The presentation is broken by hundreds of titled subsections, many of which consist of only a few sentences. Furthermore, the chapters do not sustain themes; e.g., a section focusing on Wittfogel's scholarship shifts abruptly to some trivial aspect of his personal life and then, again without transition, to his political activity. In the end, few of the topics seem to be discussed thoroughly. Many sections read as if taken directly from transcripts of Ulmen's lengthy conversations with Wittfogel. On the whole, the work fails to cohere. Finally, a disturbing, though minor, aspect of the work is that Ulmen apes Wittfogel's style.[23]

Despite its crippling problems, Ulmen's book cannot be ignored. It contains an enormous amount of useful information about Wittfogel's scholarship and politics. He raises a complex issue, but does not deal with it systematically, and because he does not, his claims about Wittfogel's success are unconvincing. Raising the possibility of a Marx-Weber synthesis, in an historical materialist framework, is both useful and important. This issue is especially significant for Western Marxists because they tend

19. See John N. Thomas, *The Institute of Pacific Relations: Asian Scholars and American Politics* (Seattle, 1974), pp. 78-79. The majority of the committee's members were strong supporters of Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist Chinese regime. See Ross Y. Koen, *The China Lobby in American Politics* (New York, 1974), pp. 55-127. Chairman McCarran was a critic of liberal China policy who supported loans to Nationalist China with the stipulation that American officers would direct Nationalist troops (*ibid.*, p. 78). McCarran later concluded that if it were not for the small group at the Institute of Pacific Relations, "China today would be free and a bulwark against further advance of the Red hordes into the Far East" (*ibid.*, p. 94). Thomas generally presents a very different view of the hearings than that expressed by Rorty and Dector.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 89.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 87.

22. Ulmen uses as his main source a polemical work (which he labels as "a balanced and critical stance"), which supports his position, for one of the most delicate, historically important, destructive and controversial issues in the book. Rorty and Dector were acting in a representative capacity for a group of which Wittfogel was a member. As for the Thomas book (an important historical source, reflecting scholarly rather than political motives), Ulmen refers to it (p. 568) in an endnote, as a reference source, but states that "Thomas' account is factual, but uninspired; sometimes politically naive and always intellectually pedestrian."

23. The short sections with assertive subtitles (e.g., "Communism, No! — McCarthyism, No!"), emotional conclusions ("Let the Marxists read Weber! Let the Weberians read Marx! Let them all read Wittfogel!" — p. xiii) and timely quotations of Wittfogel's impassioned pleas ("Whither Asia? Whither Western Society — Whither Mankind?" — p. vi) sound contrived and stand out as stylistic expressions of the author's overly reverent attitude toward his mentor.

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to cast any type of materialist analysis in a procrustean bed with Stalinism, mechanistic determinism and knee-jerk economism.[24]

Another important point revolves around Wittfogel's "new sociology of class." The idea that a state bureaucratic elite could be a ruling class is quite relevant for current debates both within and outside Marxist circles. This raises numerous questions about the role of the pre-modern state, as well as about the administration of contemporary state socialist regimes. The "new class" concept has been discussed in some recent works that are critical of state socialist bureaucracy.[25] Wittfogel's idea of a state socialist, bureaucratic ruling elite, having origins in a despotic Asian tradition, is still evident in debates about Eastern Europe today.[26] Wittfogel has not received the recognition that he deserves for providing a powerful stimulus to this debate.[27]

24. Ulmen's presentation, however, lacks clarity, detail and system. Also, the discussion of concepts is somewhat confused. For example, he refers to relations of production as being outside the mode of production (p. 93). This is a confusion that is also found in an earlier article. See Ulmen, "Wittfogel's Science of Society," *Telos*, 24 (Summer, 1975), pp. 106-107. In Marxist works the social forces of production and the social relations of production together constitute the mode of production. Outside of this "productive base," but still part of the *system* of production, is the political and ideological superstructure.

25. For example, Konrad and Szelenyi synthesize a political-economic perspective (stressing the control of surplus product) with the Weberian approach to bureaucratic domination (*op.cit.*, pp. 42-46). They stress that state socialist ("rational-redistributive") bureaucracy "does away with the separation of economic, political, and cultural power" (*ibid.*, p. 147). Though they view the communist elite as an intelligentsia, something not stressed by Wittfogel, they share with him the idea that rule in such societies is by a "single unified hierarchy" founded on power, rather than on property relations (central power is based on organizational control rather than ownership). Konrad and Szelenyi locate the roots of Eastern European absolutism in the Asiatic mode of production, arguing, like Wittfogel, that Soviet social structure has its origins in the Mongol and Turkish expansion (*ibid.*, pp. 87-88). The authors do not discuss Wittfogel, but their argument bears strong similarities to his. Rudolf Bahro also fuses Marx and Weber, and likewise stresses the total control of the single, centralized state bureaucracy. He operates along more strictly Marxist lines than do Konrad and Szelenyi, yet elements of the Wittfogelian critique remain, including the argument that state socialism has roots in Asiatic despotism. Cf. *The Alternative in Eastern Europe* (London, 1979), pp. 83-119, 131-132. Also see Andrew Arato's review of Ulf Wolter, *Rudolf Bahro: Critical Responses,* in *Telos*, 48 (Summer 1981) and Ivan Szelenyi, "Whose Alternative," *New German Critique,* 19 (Spring-Summer 1980).

26. American neo-conservatives also emphasize a concept of "new class," but they usually apply it to the technocratic intelligentsia in U.S. public policy-making positions. They fear that this group is too liberal and argue that the nation's welfare requires that they be converted to an ideology that is less critical of dominant American institutions. See Peter Steinfels, *The Neoconservatives* (New York, 1979), pp. 273-294. However, some neo-conservatives, especially the older ones who participated in Wittfogel's American intellectual circle, must be familiar with his work and his analysis of the communist "new class." Seymour Martin Lipset, in an essay on the bankruptcy of Marxism, discusses explicitly Wittfogel's view of state socialism, emphasizing communism's bureaucratic ruling class and its Asiatic despotic roots. However, in discussing "the New Class in socialist society," he fails to mention Wittfogel directly. Clearly, Lipset has been influenced by Wittfogel, or at least feels an affinity for his ideas. See Lipset, "Whatever Happened to the Proletariat?" in *Encounter*, 56 (June 1981), pp. 30-34. Neo-conservatives share Wittfogel's virulent anti-communism, his view of Communist Party bureaucrats as a ruling class, and his belief that the American Left is nihilistic and dangerous. However, neo-conservatives see themselves as "post-materialists" so they do not share his historical materialism. It is unfortunate that Ulmen does not probe the connections between Wittfogel and neo-conservatism.

27. Wittfogel's argument is extreme in its pessimism and firm in its emphasis on the perniciousness and durability of state socialist bureaucracy. There is a range of more optimistic criticism, some of which analyzes state socialism in relation to the level of economic development. Some argue that the coercive bureaucracies of the Soviet Union and Third World socialist states are alternatives to capitalist modernization. It is suggested that the needs of developing a disciplined labor force and other technical requirements of industrialization intensify bureaucratic coercion. The idea is that once modernization is advanced, the coercive

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There are several formalist aspects in this book. The first is Ulmen's presentation of Wittfogel's scholarship. *Undoubtedly,* his elaboration of the concept of hydraulic society and application of it in massive historical studies (particularly those on China) are important scholarly contributions. Wittfogel's work not only has considerable significance, but also raises important methodological questions about the role of natural factors in materialist epistemology. Ulmen deserves credit for drawing attention to these issues. But while he refers to Wittfogel's approach as "revolutionary science" (implying a harmony of scientific and political ends), he does not investigate carefully the tensions between his teacher's historical materialism and political convictions.[28] Also, Ulmen (p. 261) mentions that Wittfogel, in his later work, had returned to a "quasi-religious outlook." He insists that this should not be considered an abandonment of science, and that Wittfogel aimed at a transcendence of Marxism and toward a higher "science of values" and "a new ontology of the social sciences." In Ulmen's discussion, these are simply declarations without any substantive explanation. The science of value and social ontology are not discussed and no hint is given of their connection to historical materialism. Wittfogel's critics often characterize his work as highly polemical, implying that not only are the realms of fact and value left unmediated, but that Wittfogel's scholarship is undermined because he let it become an uncritical vehicle for his political convictions. If this criticism is correct, Wittfogel's "science of society" degenerates into dogmatism. Like dialectical materialism, a political agenda undermines its "scientific" integrity and the term "science" becomes mere legitimation. Obviously, Ulmen disagrees with this. However, to disarm it he would have had to both answer the critics substantively and provide a detailed explanation of how Wittfogel mediated fact and value.

Ulmen fails to discuss adequately the context in which Wittfogel developed his politically charged "scholarly" views. This results in a naive presentation of their historical meaning (both intended and unintended). It was not merely his McCarran testimony that alienated the left and liberal academics from Wittfogel, but also his *ideas,* which were generally hostile to the left, and his close association with the right

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bureaucracy becomes a costly liability that reduces the efficiency of production rather than boosting it. At this point, there are both economic and cultural pressures for democratization. This position, in its less deterministic form, does not argue that democratization occurs automatically; it suggests simply that economic advance increases the possibility of democracy, it does not determine it. Also, such a position recognizes that political, cultural and historical factors might retard or speed democratization. For example, Soviet political hegemony over Eastern Europe imposes Stalinist bureaucracy and slows greatly the movement toward democratic socialism. This perspective, though still materialist, is much more open to the process of change than Wittfogel's position. (On the other hand, in its fully deterministic and economistic form, this argument becomes a form of apologetics — dictatorial bureaucracy legitimates itself as a transitional state to a future rational society of industry and plenty.) For Wittfogel, systems of "total power" have no internal dialectic that might lead toward system transformation. In fact, implicit in his argument that "multi-centered" society requires the independence of Big Business from the state, is the idea that capitalist restoration is necessary to revive democracy in the state socialist bloc.

28. Wittfogel's "science of society," being in the Hegelian-Marxian methodological tradition rather than in the Kantian-Weberian one, aims to unify fact and value. Those who operate in this tradition have often used immanent critique to overcome the fact-value dualism. This requires elaboration of historical contradictions (and convergences) between ideology (values given in history) and its related productive and social systems. Such a critique is not a matter of arbitrary, individual taste, nor does it lay claim to transcendental grounding. Instead, it portrays contradictions immanent in the historical process. Wittfogel does not adopt this method (at least not directly) and Ulmen, despite statements about "revolutionary science," does not clarify what method, if any, is substituted.

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(e..g, with scholars such as Gerhard Niemeyer and groups like the American Committee for Cultural Freedom). This was not a disengaged scholar, but one who took a strong political stance and used his scholarly work to communicate it. *Oriental Despotism* is, among other things, a plea to combat international communism before it swallows the West. This theme is even stronger and more polemical in some of his papers and pamphlets of the 1950s and 1960s. Furthermore, he believed that communist infiltration and the erosion of American morality were grave threats to the nation. Some of these points were made at the McCarran hearings and some were expressed in his writings before and after the hearings. Ulmen fails to discuss the impact of such views in the midst of Cold War hysteria and public fears about communism. Wittfogel's so-called "No!" to McCarthyism was superficial and formal. In reality, he participated in it, at least indirectly, by providing intellectual legitimation for its more primitive purveyors.[29] Wittfogel chose a course close to that of repressive forces operating in American society. He must have understood this, even if he did not endorse their specific programs. Ulmen's presentation focuses on the fact that Wittfogel lacked formal ties to McCarthy, but ignores the obvious connections between Wittfogel and the broader reactionary climate of the time.[30]

Wittfogel believes that the communist "monopoly bureaucracy," unlike "bourgeois democracy," does not "leave the door open" to democratic social transformation. Instead, the Asiatic roots of state socialism determine its development into a "total managerial society" from which there is "no exit." The internal growth of this system is limited to ever increasing rationalization of its system of domination. In the end, it can be brought down only by "external forces" such as "wars and conquests." Wittfogel's apocalyptic vision pits monolithic, expansionary communism against imperfect but open Western democracy. In a new forward to the 1981 edition of *Oriental Despotism,* he speaks of a "global crisis" and America's need to understand hardware, small wars,

29. This is not to impugn Wittfogel's integrity, for he appeared to believe sincerely in a perspective that had roots in his painful experiences with Nazi concentration camps and Stalinist repression. However, the path he chose in the 1950s must also be seen in its Cold War context and be evaluated in terms of its consequences for it. His passionate warnings about the communist threat (the alleged indirect threat of Lattimore as well as that posed by direct agents), his argument that America needs to become a "democracy with teeth" (p. 501) to defend against the revolutionary left's "nihilistic" rejection of American society and his silence about Western repression, exploitation and corporate domination, together constituted a clear "No" (!) to both leftists and liberals.

30. Wittfogel's McCarran testimony lives. It (along with information from a personal discussion Feuer had with Wittfogel and material from the Ulmen biography) is cited several times in Lewis Feuer's "The Frankfurt Marxists and the Columbia Liberals," *Survey* (Summer 1980) — a ridiculous attempt to connect the Institut für Sozialforschung to the international communist movement. This pseudo-exposé struggles futilely to link the two by pointing to the alleged communist ties of Dr. Julian Gumperz, a person who was strongly involved in the negotiations to settle the exiled Institute at Columbia University. Feuer argues that Gumperz was a "great admirer" of Willi Munzenberg, an alleged master in the formation of communist front organizations. By loose argument and innuendo the reader is led to the question, "Was the Institut für Sozialforschung at its inception one of Willi Munzenberg's many ventures in the organization of fellow travelers?" (*ibid.*, p. 166). The implication is that it was a Soviet front organization in its early years and "in its later years became more tepid in its communist leaning, preferring a more amorphous variety of fellow traveling" (*ibid.*, p. 69). However tepid, "the Institute as a whole held on to its fellow-traveling perch" (*ibid.*, p. 170). Feuer's revived Cold War distortion of the Frankfurt School provides an excellent illustration of why it is necessary to reject decisively formalist presentations of the events of the McCarthy era. The ghosts of that period are still on the prowl, as are their Stalinist cousins. Attempts to appropriate history by either extreme require forceful, accurate, historically grounded criticism. This is an important enterprise because interpretations of history often become the basis of action in the present.

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and the "moral fiber." Though he mentions small wars "stupidly begun, stupidly conducted and stupidly terminated,"[31] it is clear that he believes that the communist threat must be resisted wherever (and in whatever form) it appears. Wittfogel makes an eliptical reference to U.S. errors, during the Vietnam conflict, and mentions occasionally the need for institutional change in the West, but the ultimate thrust of his position is the showdown between the democratic West and the totalitarian East. Such a position promotes the undifferentiated and inflexible view of the communist world that characterized Cold War America.

Ulmen suggests that Lattimore's policy recommendations were irresponsible (p. 276). Lattimore claimed that a communist China and the spread of communism were inevitable. While Lattimore and other liberals were unrealistically optimistic about the Soviet bureaucracy and Wittfogel was arguing vehemently for the monolithic view of communism against those who predicted a Sino-Soviet split,[32] Lattimore was also claiming that communist states reflected diverse national and ethnic histories, cultures and conflicts. U.S. policy makers would have benefited immensely from this perspective in the 1950s and 1960s. Had they acted on it, perhaps thousands of lives would have been spared and foreign policy disasters such as the Vietnam war and the Bay of Pigs invasion could have been avoided. Today, the conflictual relations between the Soviet Union and China, the skirmish betwen China and Vietnam and the growing ties between the U.S. and China can be understood only through such a lens. This in no way invalidates Wittfogel's fears about Stalinist bureaucracy, but it does imply that he is something less than a persecuted prophet.

*Robert J. Antonio*

31. *Oriental Despotism, op.cit.*, pp. xlv-xlvi.
32. See, for example, Wittfogel, "How to Checkmate Stalin in Asia: An American Policy Geared to Chinese Realities," *Commentary*, 10 (October 1950).

Alvin Gouldner. *The Two Marxisms: Contradictions and Anomalies in the Development of Theory*. New York: Seabury Press, 1980. $17.50 hardback.

Hal Draper. *Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1978. *Volume 1: State and Bureaucracy*. $9.50 paperback. *Volume 2: The Politics of Social Classes*. $12.95 paperback. Set of two volumes in hardback: $28.50.

Donald Hodges. *The Bureaucratization of Socialism*. Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1981. $15.00 hardback.

During the 1970s, the left became aware of two Marxisms: one philosophical, the other scientific. Some philosophical Marxism tends to be moralist, idealist, and voluntarist; scientific Marxism is behaviorist, materialist, and determinist. The philosophers often dislike Engels, who they see as Marx's empiricist translator and positivist vulgarizer, but the scientists find him a congenial spirit, the great collaborator of Marx and co-founder of a scientific paradigm. Gouldner's book is a study of these Marxisms: a bold contribution to the sociology of Marxism. Whichever Marxism one prefers, Gouldner's book is a provocative analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of both.

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Gouldner leans toward the philosophers, toward Critical Theory. If he had to choose he would stand with the Frankfurt School, with the socialist humanists, with the existentialist Marxists, with the praxis philosophers, with thinkers such as Lukacs. He recognizes that the scientific Marxists, the Union of Radical Political Economists, the communist scholars at the Paris C.E.R.M., the Althusserian School, the disciples of Paul Sweezy and Charles Bettelheim, and other Marxists in the social sciences have much to say. But his heart goes out to the philosophers (though his head keeps a critical eye on Critical Theory). After all, he points out, it was the scientific tradition in Marxism represented by the Second International and the Bolsheviks that led to the totalitarian horrors of Marxists in power. On page 34 Gouldner announces a central thesis that the two Marxisms are present in the original thought of Marx, a unity splitting after his death in 1883 into two structurally distinct tendencies.

In Marx's thought between 1841 and 1883, is philosophical or critical Marxism really as important as the scientific tendency? As Gouldner's book develops, evidence mounts against his own thesis. We come to see that the early Hegelian and humanist Marx gives way to the scientific, materialist and behaviorist Marx of the mature years — a trend Engels continues after his collaborator's death. To say that Marx's Marxism is a unity of the young Hegelian and the mature scientist is like saying that the philosophy of Bertrand Russell combines his youthful Calvinism with the skeptical thought expressed in a pile of books. Of course, Marx never surrenders his stress on overcoming alienation, and we need not accept Althusser's exaggerations about an epistemological break. But the mature Marx translates the stress on overcoming alienation into the scientific and amoral language of political economy, class analysis, and materialist theory. There is a big difference between the early and the mature Marx, between the critical philosopher and the social scientist.

Is Marx a moralist? Though he sometimes explodes with moral outrage over capitalism's horrors, he is contemptuous of morality and ethical theorizing: his point of view is behaviorist, positivist, and moral. There are numerous passages like the ones in which he talks of "ideological nonsense about right and other trash so common among French socialists," about materialist analysis having "proved all morality to be bankrupt," and about being "obliged to insert phrases concerning 'duty,' 'morality,' and 'justice' into the preamble, but these are placed in such a way that they can do no harm."

Is he an idealist? His thought usually stresses the material basis of historical change and intellectual life. Is he a voluntarist? There are voluntarist strains in his thought, but his system of economic sociology is determinist: his will to revolution is tempered by a sense of fatality. In the 1840s and 1860s he is ready to storm heaven because he sees objective conditions for an assault, but in the 1850s and 1870s he withdraws into his study when the time is unripe. The evidence mounts until near the end of the book, when Gouldner unconsciously gives up his thesis. On page 318 he slips into the admission that scientific Marxism was the original theory, while critical Marxism lurked as background assumptions. Allegedly, these assumptions were repressed and unstated, but popped out in the 20th century as a second Marxism. Of course, you can get Marxist wine in either scientific or philosophical bottles nowadays! But is the wine of critical philosophy vintage Marx? Gouldner, who at first thought it smacked of the good year 1859, winds up implying that it belongs to the 20th century.

More important than Gouldner's central thesis is that third of the book devoted to paradigms and anomalies in Marxism. Our sociologist gives a witty analysis of the way "paradigm patriarchs" fend off "intellectual guerrillas" who point to anomalies

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disturbing the patriarchs' established theoretical paradigms. Marxist paradigm patriarchs can deal with intellectual guerrillas among their graduate students in summary fashion: they may drum them out of the program. But what do you do with an intellectual guerrilla like Gouldner himself. And he's got an anomalous dilly for all the patriarchs — from Howard Sherman to Althusser, from Szymanski to Mandel. This anomaly is the behavior of state bureaucrats in the 20th century.

For the Marxist paradigm patriarchs, state bureaucracies are sometimes mere agents of the bourgeoisie, sometimes relatively autonomous upstarts kicking around fractions of the capitalist class. A few patriarchs see bureaucracies as ruling strata in deformed workers' states, others see them as intelligentsias leading socialist societies toward communism. Our intellectual guerrilla has no trouble showing that state bureaucracies are none of these things. In western states the vast bureaucracies for administration, education, health, welfare, and war look like new classes, and in eastern states they have grown from the skimpy strata of yesteryear into the behemoths sucking up the economic surplus.

Already in the 19th century Marx struggles with this anomaly in his own theory, Gouldner argues, the anomaly of state bureaucrats who kowtow to no one. He manages to sweep the anomaly under the rugs of the "Bonapartist State" and the "Asiatic mode of production." Both Marx and Engels see that the state is much more than a hammer in the hand of an owning class. In Europe the Bonapartist state can hit the capitalists on the head, too; in Asia state despotisms enslave everybody. Marx, says Gouldner, suppresses the anomaly by arguing that Bonapartism is a fever striking European societies in crisis periods when neither owning classes nor working classes are strong enough to rule. He decides that in normal periods the disease will pass. And he stuffs 4,000 years of bureaucratic China, 3,000 years of bureaucratic Egypt, 2,000 years of ancient bureaucratic Mexico, and 1,000 years of not-yet-known bureaucratic Sumeria into the bag of the "asiatic mode" and shuts them up in a closet for stagnant societies. Marxists have just rediscovered this forgotten closet containing most of history. But today the anomaly of the bureaucratic class is creeping from under rugs and breaking out of closets to write on the walls of the Marxist paradigm. Marxist paradigm patriarchs close their eyes and feel their way past the Mene, Tekel, Upharsin.

Draper is an intellectual guerrilla who obeys the writing by reinterpreting Marx's original paradigm throughout the first volume of *Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution*. The first volumes of this ambitious work, two volumes covering state bureaucracy and social classes, have been available for three years; the forthcoming third volume treating Marx's theory of political revolution should appear within the next two years; a fourth volume will study Marx's views on the transformation of society in the post-revolutionary period. For Draper, Marx saw the bureaucracy as a class throughout most of history. In France it was a class under the absolute monarchy and in Germany in the early 19th century. It was a class during the Bonapartism of Louis Napoleon from 1851 to 1870 (and for Engels under Bismarck from 1870 to 1890). It was a class in 19th-century Tsarist Russia. And it was a class under the Asiatic despotisms that Marx saw dominant in most non-Western societies.

In 1848, in England the bourgeoisie was able to exercise socio-economic *and* political sway; barely more than a million people had the vote — the propertied classes. Marx, says Draper, thought that as the bourgeoisie similarly gained more and more social and political power in other countries, the bureaucracy would be more and more reduced to a social stratum acting merely as the agent of the ruling class. But what Marx guessed was going to be the "normal" status of the bureaucracy was

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really a passing phase of the 19th century. "The class status of the bureaucracy has again become a moot question in the contemporary world, which sees the down phase of bourgeois society and the increasing prevalence of autonomized state phenomena." Marxist paradigm patriarchs, Draper warns, have turned Marx's formulations about a "normal" status of the bureaucracy into a suprahistorical law. If Marx were here today, our intellectual guerrilla implies, he would be the first to tell us that the 20th century is not the dictatorship of the proletariat but the dictatorship of the bureaucracy. He would explain "socialist" societies as exploitative systems held down by a bureaucratic class.

Nowhere in his voluminous writings does Marx provide a clear definition of class, and he hardly ever uses the term for the bureaucracy. So for many chapters Draper goes through Marx's treatment of bureaucracies and slowly shows how Marx thought of them under Absolutism, Bonapartism, Tsarism and Despotism. When referring to Asiatic society, Marx did not once call the bureaucracy a class. For such difficult facts Draper has explanations. Marx never used the term, Draper explains, because he thought it obvious that the despotic bureaucracy was a class and because he only mentioned Asia in passing rather than systematically treating it with careful definitions. Why is it so difficult for Marx to analyze history and then answer the question, *Is the bureaucracy a class?* Because, says Draper, this abstract question is little better than "How high is up?" It is little better than the question, "Is a black a slave?" A black becomes a slave in certain social relations. A state bureaucracy always describes a formation of government officials, but these creatures of the desk enter into different social relations depending on what societal whole they function in. So do war lords, who appear in Mycenean Greece, medieval France, and Kuomintang China. Are war lords feudal barons? We can only decide if they form a feudal class by examining the social relations in which they do their exploiting and robbing: the French *seigneur* surrounded by serfs is more feudal than the Homeric hero. Likewise, the Tsar's office-holding minions are a class, while the bored clerks obeying *la Troisième République* are not.

Draper's thesis that for Marx the bureaucracy is a class has not received the attention it deserves; more left-wing scholars must read the first volume of his tetralogy in order to make a judgment. For if a consensus should emerge that Draper is right, Marx would appear more sophisticated than he does to many on the New Left; he would seem a thinker capable of imagining the dangers of bureaucratization in the future. Marx probably understood little of these dangers. Consider the following exchange he set up between himself and Bakunin on socialist revolution:

"BAKUNIN: Result? Rule of the vast majority of the people by a privileged minority. But Marx says that this minority will be made up of workers. Yes, of course, but of ex-workers: once the workers have become mere representatives or rulers of the people they cease to be workers.

"MARX: No more than a manufacturer today ceases to be a capitalist when he becomes a member of the municipal council.

"BAKUNIN: And from the heights of the state they look down on the low world of the workers. From then on they represent not the people but themselves and their own claims to govern the people." (*Marx-Engels Werke* 18:635.) Here Marx takes for granted that during the transition period following a revolution, the manufacturer's role in a municipal council parallels that of a worker. It does not. The capitalist serving in the municipal council can delegate the task of exploiting his workers, but the worker in government cannot delegate his role of being exploited. The practice of 20th-century Marxism has so far resolved the Marx-Bakunin debate in favor of the

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impulsive revolutionary from Russia. He warned of a coming "Red Bureaucracy." The bureaucracy as a social group, he reasoned, was already a class because it monopolized a factor of production — education.

Donald Hodges is an intellectual guerrilla who thinks that Marx's definition of class was clear enough but inadequately applied to the bureaucracy; Hodges develops Bakunin's thesis in order to reconstruct Marx's conceptual paradigm. He agrees with Draper that Marx often saw the bureaucracy as a class, but he reshapes the conceptual instruments and adds more to the tool kit in order to analyze the new social formations in the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and China. These formations are socialist, he argues, because they have abolished bourgeois private property; and by providing food, housing, jobs, medicine, and education for everyone they have climbed a rung on the ladder of historical progress. Hodges, a Third Worldist who has lived in underdeveloped countries, is more impressed by these achievements than many New Leftists in industrial countries. You have to have experienced the illiteracy, disease, filth, unemployment, servility, desperation, and torture the Third World suffers to appreciate his point of view. But his insistence that bureaucratized societies are socialist is hard to take.

Hodges has no illusions about these societies. They are exploited by a ruling class of bureaucrats. These bureaucrats make up a class because they own expertise, the brain power corresponding to organization — a fourth factor of production underrated by Marx. Marx followed the classical economists in emphasizing three factors of production — land, labor, and instruments — and three great classes based on ownership of these factors: landlords, workers, and capitalists. But writers from Mikhail Bakunin to Alfred Marshall have pointed to a fourth factor called education or organization, and a fourth great class based on it: the bureaucracy. This class becomes prominent under late capitalism, Hodges argues, and comes into its own under socialism.

Brezhnev's "real socialism" in the Soviet Union has destroyed capitalist exploitation, Hodges argues, but bureaucratic exploitation remains. Socialist revolutions in eastern societies have put an end to private owners who suck up profits of enterprise, interest, dividends, and rents, but most socialist goals are missed. For bureaucratic employees still enjoy high salaries, remuneration so far above the value of labor power that the salaries include part of the surplus value produced by the workers. Exploitation survives, exploitation defined in Marxist terms. Since the socialist system has merely done away with capitalist exploitation, Hodges reasons, the revolutions of the 20th century are not socialist in Marx's sense: we must no longer confuse "socialism" with the first stage of communist society.

Marx, writing under conditions of competitive capitalism in the 19th century, could assume a standard rate of exploitation for all workers. Such an assumption won't do for today's monopoly capitalism, so Hodges postulates a hierarchy of rates of exploitation, including negative rates for employees who get more from society than they give. This postulate provides him with the basis for a distinction between a bureaucratic and petty-bureaucratic class, one of the most original ideas in his book. The foreman in a factory receives back as salary the equivalent of the new value he adds to the product and also a smaller sum representing the surplus value generated by the workers he supervises. But the foreman's own supervisor is the production manager, and from the surplus labor of the workers this manager gets *the bulk of his salary*. Above the worker who generates the surplus stand the foreman and the manager representing two classes — the petty bureaucracy and the bureaucracy. The petty bureaucrat derives only a fraction of his salary from the pool of surplus labor,

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but the bureaucrat obtains from it the bulk of his income.

Hodges does not complete his economic analysis of the bureaucratic mode of production with its political counterpart: a theory of the bureaucratic state. All the ingredients are there for developing such a theory, but he moves from his economic theory of socialism into a discussion of the political practice of socialist societies. This missing link must be supplied to fully analyze the bureaucratic social formation. How, for example, does a bureaucratic state differ from a capitalist one? How does it respond to class antagonisms under socialism? To understand socialist societies we need a theory of the new political formation as well as the corresponding economic formation: the role of political parties under socialism, the conflict between class forces and political structures corresponding to the conflict between the productive forces and social relations, and the role of the state in fettering the emergence of an independently organized working class. Hodges leaves us guessing about these political questions in a work that is supposed to deal with the new social formation as a whole.

*Marxismo y revolucion en el siglo viente,* the much larger Mexican edition of Hodges' work published in Mexico City in 1978, contains a clue to the missing discussion. Chapter six, not found in the English edition, faces the question: Is the state form of the bureaucratic mode of production a Bonapartist regime or a new political order? A defining trait of Bonapartist regimes is the way the state acts as a "third force" holding in balance the main social classes struggling for control of the economy and government. The state in socialist societies, Hodges points out, is not such a third force, not a Bonapartist regime. The socialist state has both the economic power and political mastery, it is both the ruling and the governing class. So it cannot referee a class struggle. It has so nailed down its own power by expropriating the bourgeoisie that it is rightly called totalitarian. At most, class struggle can flare up between the bureaucratic class itself and the working class — Poland is the latest example. Just as the bureaucracy monopolizes economic power, so it monopolizes political power: we have here a new political order.

If we fit together Hodges' statements in Chapter Six with his discussion of socialist states in the English edition we get the following sketch of the bureaucratic political formation. By a political formation he means the organized political power of one class for holding down another by means of the coercive and ideological machinery of government — the generalized Marxist definition of the state. The state is the structure of political power; its organs are the machinery of power. How can we tell a bureaucratic state from a bourgeois state? The following points taken together mark off the bureaucratic state. First, the bureaucratic state cannot umpire the basic class struggle under socialism, the contest between bureaucrats and workers. For the state is itself in the game, playing for the bureaucratic class. Second, the bureaucratic state handles class antagonisms by stifling and distorting their political expression. It tries to smother independent political organization of the working class; it strangles efforts at independent trade union organization as in Poland. Stunted political life under socialism gasps for air. Third, the bureaucratic state has an ideology that masks and justifies its activities. It has converted Marx's theory of post-capitalist society, a theory disconfirmed by history, into a ruling ideology. Fourth, on the surface the executive branch of the bureaucratic state is the government — its formal appearance. But in reality the vangard party governs. The bourgeois government-state is replaced by a bureaucratic party-state. Fifth, political struggles in the bureaucratic state are suppressed. At the beginning, the struggle among parties disappears, next factional struggles within the vangard party vanish, and finally all political opposition is silenced under socialism. Sixth, in the bureaucratic state the struggle among social

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classes fades into the background; up front rages a struggle inside the ruling class: the technobureaucracy running the means of production wrestles with the political bureaucracy formulating major policies. Seventh, the coercive and ideological machineries of the bureaucratic state are designed to reproduce the bureaucratic relations of production. These relations face threats from a working class thirsting for democratic control and from an international bourgeoisie in capitalist states. Eighth, the coercive and ideological machineries are designed to defend bureaucratic states against more powerful states of the same type. Vietnam looks over its shoulder at China, while China eyes the Soviet Union with suspicion. Ninth, the bureaucratic state's executive power represents the interests of the bureaucratic class fraction holding the whip hand at the moment; it also represents the interests other bureaucratic sectors have in common. Tenth, in a bureaucratic state these common interests define the so-called national interest and the people's welfare. The bureaucratic state dons the ideological costume of a state of the whole people based on people's power, of a state expressing the will of the workers, peasants, and intelligentsia, of a state taking into account the basic interests of all social groups and ethnic minorities.

Together these ten theses make up the implicit theory of the bureaucratic state that Hodges should have worked out in a separate chapter. As we have seen, a bureaucratic state is not a Bonapartist regime. A Bonapartist regime is one kind of bureaucratic regime, but there are other types. In the Marx-Hodges' framework, how can we tell a bureaucratic state from a bureaucratic regime?

A bureaucratic regime is government by a bureaucratic class. Now, in Marx's sense, the class that rules is the class that holds economic power, while the class that governs wields political power: and he thought that the economically ruling class usually governs. But not always. For there are bureaucratic regimes, Hodges explains, in which the bureaucratic class governs but does not economically rule. Under the 17th- and 18th-century Absolute Monarchy, as the rising bourgeoisie challenged the economically ruling class of landed aristocrats, there was a bureaucratic regime: by divine right the king ruled through the royal bureaucracy and the army, responsible only to God. Under the first and second Bonapartes the proletariat challenged the bourgeoisie; the bureaucracy played off one class against another; the state became relatively autonomous. There was a bureaucratic regime. These were bureaucratic regimes recognized by Marx, but in the Mexican edition of Hodges' work there are also discussions of the bureaucratic regimes of the Nazi and fascist states. Under Nazism and fascism, a bureaucratic class wielded political power, the bourgeoisie held onto economic power, and the proletariat was pounded down with the help of a mass party. The party rested on a coalition of the petty bourgeoisie and the petty bureaucracy.

The Mexican regime analyzed by Hodges in his book *Mexico 1910-1976* and the Peronist regime analyzed in his *Argentina 1943-1976* are examples of bureaucratic regimes. In these the monopoly of political power by a bureaucratic class was — in Mexico still is — shored up by a powerful trade union organization against the economically dominant capitalist class. Trotsky called such regimes Bonapartist. They are not, for the governing bureaucracy and oppressed proletariat are allied against the ruling class. The repressive military dictatorships in Latin America during the 1960s and 1970s are examples of still another type of bureaucratic regime. Their ugly faces show many features of fascism but lack a telltale scar: a populist mass basis in a fanatical party of the petty bourgeoisie or petty bureaucracy. The military dictators govern from the Olympian heights of the state, hurling lightning bolts of torture at the underlying population.

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We may yet see a socialist bureaucratic regime that gives in to an independently organized working class to pave the road toward new communist relations of production: in such a society, the workers rule while the bureaucratic class governs. If this were to happen in Poland, for example, we would have an instance of the famous Trotskyist model of a "degenerate workers' state run by bureaucratic elements."

We have now worked out the sketch of a second theory, a Hodgesian theory of bureaucratic regimes. Do not confuse the theory of bureaucratic regimes with the theory of the bureaucratic state. A bureaucratic regime may be the coercive and ideological machinery of the bureaucratic state, but it may also be the government in a feudal order as in 18th-century France, in a bourgeois order as in 20th-century Mexico, and in a post-bureaucratic order as in a possible Poland of the future. In none of these three bureaucratic regimes is the state itself bureaucratic: the government is bureaucratic or the ruling party is bureaucratic. For the state to be bureaucratic, Hodges' conditions of a bureaucratic state must be present: an established political formation in which the bureaucratic class commands the economic basis as well as the political superstructure of power. In established political formations the class that governs also rules, but in transitional political formations the political superstructure and economic infrastructure are out of joint.

This distinction is implicit in Marx's writings, especially in the first examples on the list given to illustrate a bureaucratic regime: Absolutist Monarchy, Bonapartism, Fascism, Nazism, Mexico, Peronism, Military Dictatorship, and a Socialist Bureaucratic Regime. As we glance at these regimes one by one, we note the transitional state facing now in this direction, now in that, showing different appearances. The transitional state differs from the established state as lava from obsidian. Established political formations fit into established social formations such as feudalism, capitalism, and socialism; all other political formations are transitory. Transitional bureaucratic regimes are part of the definition of transitional political states. Established political formations are not the most common. If you take the 162 countries of our world and check off a few at random, you will find many regimes fitting transitional states. Why is this so?

We have seen that a bureaucratic political regime can ride on feudal economic formations, capitalist economic formations, bureaucratic economic formations, and post-bureaucratic economic formations. Likewise a bureaucratic economic formation can support proletarian political regimes, petty bureaucratic political regimes, bureaucratic political regimes, and bourgeois political regimes. For every pure, stable state there are a dozen mixed, unstable ones. Do you want an example of a proletarian regime at the helm of a bureaucratic economic formation? Think of China, Yugoslavia, or Cuba after the seizure of power by communists; the salaries of government officials were near those of skilled workers; but these "dictatorships of the proletariat" were transitional regimes of short duration. Hodges argues that each of these regimes gave way to petty bureaucratic regimes in the 1960s and finally to bureaucratic regimes.

There is a frightening prospect considered by Hodges at the end of the Mexican edition of his work; he speculates that the United States may arrive at bureaucratic socialism by still another route. Ownership is increasingly split off from control in the giant corporations as they are bureaucratized. Ownership of the corporations is more and more irrelevant to their management; the beneficiaries of the corporation are becoming the "professional-managerial class" rather than the major stockholders. This creeping socialism may creep its way out of capitalism under a bourgeois regime. Do you remember how Marx described early 19th-century England as a country in

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which the bourgeoisie ruled but did not govern? There the landed aristocracy continued to govern even after the abolition of feudalism. May not America, Hodges wonders, evolve a weird socialism of its own, a bureaucratic economic formation in the form of manager-controlled corporations, while the private business sector keeps political power? This scenario might take half a century to develop, but Hodges does not rule out the possibility.

In these related theories of a bureaucratic state and bureaucratic regime we have the elements of a complex theory of political bureaucracy that goes beyond what most Marxists and political scientists are doing. It can help rescue Marxist political theory from the quicksands of oversimplification and superficiality in which it flounders. Much Marxist theory has sunk to a caricature of present political realities.

Hodges should have included this important discussion in his book. How can we account for its omission? The American edition is half as long as the Mexican, but three times as expensive; Hodges must have cut length to reduce costs. And the Mexican volume presents a theory of capitalist as well as socialist bureaucracy. Hodges' theory of the bureaucratization of capitalism forced him to consider the difference between a bureaucratic regime compatible with capitalism as a bureaucratic state. We can hope that his next book will analyze the political aspect of bureaucratic socialism in detail.

*Ross Gandy*

## Daniel Yankelovich. *New Rules: Searching for Self-Fulfillment in a World Turned Upside Down.* New York: Random House, 1981.

Social critics have often been concerned with the tenuous connection between the self and the social order in America. Writing before the middle of the last century, Tocqueville stated that the people of the United States "form the habit of thinking of themselves in isolation and imagine that their whole destiny is in their own hands.... Each man is forever thrown back on himself alone, and there is danger that he may be shut up in the solitude of his own heart." [1] Tocqueville's concern here is with one of the negative effects of the shift from an aristocracy to a democracy. Though the American political and economic order has been transformed significantly over the last 150 years the issues that Tocqueville raised in this passage are still of great importance.

Especially since World War II, social critics in America have continually redefined their views about the increasing preoccupation with the self in the context of the breakdown of traditional institutional ties. In *The Lonely Crowd,* David Riesman differentiated among societies in which people were tradition-directed, inner-directed, and other-directed. [2] In a tradition-directed society, which exists in most of those areas that are rooted in a feudal way of life, people have been likely to submerge themselves in the goals of the group. Fixed by custom, these goals could not be violated in external behavior; otherwise, ostracism might result. The possibility for greater personal mobility characterizes the lives of the inner-directed, whose opportunities for emancipation are provided by an expanding industrial society. Though forced to

1. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (New York, 1966), p. 508.
2. *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* (New Haven, 1960).

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conform, they are allowed more latitude in choice, which arises not so much from goals fixed unalterably in the past but from the novel situations that they are likely to confront in a period of rapid productivity and change. Choice here is channeled "through a rigid though highly individualized character" "implanted by elders" who are alert to the competing demands of a rapidly expanding society and economy.[3] However, according to Riesman, once the problems of economic scarcity have been solved, people are less likely to be bound to the values of "hard-enduringness and enterprise" associated with the work ethic.[4] More concerned with consumption than with production, the "other-directed" find work less compelling and are more attuned to the demands of the peer group than to the standards imposed by parents.

Although he generally lamented the rise of the "other-directed" individual whose self-worth is tied to the responsiveness of others, Riesman hoped that an ideal of autonomy might come to prevail in America and therefore a greater attentiveness to one's "own feelings and aspirations."[5] Similarly, in developing his concept of identity, Erik Erikson described quite hopefully the possibility for creative, self-conscious allegiances despite the shifting and contradictory demands of modern American life. In *Childhood and Society,* Erikson spoke of the possibility of forging an identity by preserving "a certain element of deliberate tentativeness of autonomous choice."[6] Like Erikson and Riesman before him, Allen Wheelis, in commenting on the stultifying life of the individual who was bound by rigid codes in both private and public life, spoke of *The Quest for Identity* as a positive response to the desiccated authority of institutional values.[7]

All these social critics viewed the breakdown of traditional ties as an opportunity for personal growth. They were pleased with the options available to the individual because of the diversity of life in pluralistic America. Though they might lament the conformity of the majority of the American people during the Cold War period that spawned a preoccupation with the niceties of middle-class life, they believed that the environment was open enough so that if one's capacities were utilized, the possibility for becoming productive yet critical remained.

Their studies ultimately provided the basis for Robert Jay Lifton's presentation of the idea of "protean man," who is willing to engage in "an interminable series of experiments and explorations — some shallow, some profound — each of which may be readily abandoned in favor of still new psychological quests."[8] The "protean" individual seeks change, often moving rapidly from one situation to another, absorbing what is acceptable and consolidating it within the framework of an ever-shifting sense of identity.[9] In this context, the problem of choice is critical. For, given the perception of the transitory nature of the personality as opposed to the "old stable ego of character,"[10] one is forced to engage in a process of continual re-evaluation. Aware of the difficulty of this stance which can easily lead to a compensatory search for restorative order that can take totalitarian political, religious, and even psychological forms, Lifton spoke of the desire to anchor oneself in

3. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 307.
6. *Childhood and Society* (New York, 1963), p. 286.
7. *The Quest for Identity* (New York, 1958).
8. "Protean Man," *Partisan Review,* 35 (1968), p. 17.
9. Lifton acknowledged the existential roots of this idea which was explored in a philosophical manner by Sartre in *Being and Nothingness.*
10. The expression was used by D.H. Lawrence. See *The Collected Letters of D.H. Lawrence,* ed. Harry T. Moore (New York, 1962), I, 282.

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a large organization, in a relationship with another person, or in the past, as substitutes for the loss of a traditional order.

On hindsight, Lifton's caution has proved to be correct since over the last ten years a plethora of sects and cults has developed in this country. Paul Goodman, Norman O. Brown, Theodore Roszak and Charles Reich, all of whom in varying contexts came to speak much more positively than Lifton of the image of "protean man" in the 1960s and early 1970s, did not acknowledge fully enough this possibility; or, if they did, were too enthralled with the emergence of "a new consciousness" to pay much attention to the desire on the part of many for totalistic solutions.[11] For they perceived the breakdown of traditional ties between people and the erosion of loyalty to American institutions as an opportunity for men and women to explore themselves in significant ways. They argued that a new openness to oneself and others had emerged in American culture. Central to this argument was the idea that industrial civilization generally and capitalism in particular have exacted an impossible toll from human beings whose needs for self-expression are being thwarted daily by oppressive living and working conditions. The growth of technology and bureaucracy as well as the elevation of science and reason in an increasingly highly populated, urban environment have weakened people's capacity to feel and intuit in ways that were once available in the past. However, because these critics believed that the basic problems of economic scarcity had been essentially solved, they were convinced that a greater sense of inwardness would develop in America. The growth of new as well as the resurrection of certain old therapeutic, spiritual, artistic and religious modes that encouraged a deepening awareness of one's feelings was welcomed by them as a necessary condition for any significant social transformation or, at the very least, as a process that must take place simultaneously with efforts at institutional reform, the importance of which was sometimes viewed quite skeptically if it was acknowledged at all.[12]

Finally, there has emerged more recently a growing number of social critics who view the trend towards self-absorption, particularly the emphasis on feelings, in primarily negative terms. Unlike those who regarded the changes in sensibility as a rich, creative outburst mirroring the dislocation and complexity of life in the 20th century, Christopher Lasch and Daniel Bell believe that America has been inundated by the values of modernist culture in which the idea of authority has been debunked and restraint has been flouted.[13] In this context, post-modernists are viewed as essentially playing out in an unbridled, if not hallucinatory, manner fantasies that were at least given shape by their modernist predecessors. For example, Bell looks quite skeptically at the breakup of ordered space in painting, the fragmentation of time in literature, and the dissonant sound of modern music. While he may point to the

11. Paul Goodman, *New Reformation: Notes of a Neolithic Conservative* (New York, 1970). Norman O. Brown, *Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytic Meaning of History* (Middletown, Conn., 1959). Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter-culture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and the Youthful Oposition* (Garden City, N.Y., 1969). Charles Reich, *The Greening of America* (New York, 1970).

12. Herbert Marcuse was the notable exception. He emphasized the importance of transforming institutional life in the context of his discussion of the emergence of "the new sensibility." See *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (Boston, 1964); and *An Essay on Liberation* (Boston, 1969).

13. Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations* (New York, 1978); Daniel Bell, *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (New York, 1976). See also Bell's *The Winding Passage: Essays and Sociological Journeys 1960-1980* (Cambridge, 1980).

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artistry of Picasso, Joyce and Schoenberg, he decries the work of Pollock, Ginsberg, and Cage because of its improvisatory, chaotic and confessional nature.

Highly critical of the culture at large which in the conduct of daily life has come to mirror the psychological contours of post-modernism in the celebration of the self, these critics are very concerned with the deteriorating nature of public life, particularly the breakdown of meaningful institutional ties. Richard Sennet, as well as Lasch and Bell, views the retreat into the self as a form of destructive withdrawal from the world, the mirror image of bourgeois individualism which has been transformed into a narcissistic preoccupation with emotional life. [14] The immersion in feelings as well as in the flux of experience is regarded at best as a harmless idyll and at worst as a regressive stance that seeks to restore the emotional resonance and irresponsibility of infancy, and that ends paradoxically in a decreased ability to respond to one's surroundings. [15]

This critique, in part, has been a reaction to the development in the 1960s of a counter-culture that in its opposition to the repressive and exploitative features of American life at home and abroad encouraged people to engage in Dionysian modes of self-definition and public protest. The excesses of the decade have been constantly emphasized: the heavy use of drugs, the immersion in song and dance, the spread of feeling therapies, the use of confrontational politics, though not inextricably bound to one another, all suggested the development of a "culture of release." [16] Rarely acknowledging the heterogeneity of the period, these critics have tended to ignore the modes of restraint that generally prevailed in the realm of political protest, just as they have overlooked the attempts to utilize methods for the integration of feeling in therapy. They dwell upon "the pathetic celebration of the self — a self that had been emptied of content and which masqueraded as being vital through the playacting of Revolution." [17]

Not confining their criticism to the counter-culture, Lasch and Bell have spoken of the search for immediate gratification in the wider society which is encouraged by consumerism. Lasch is particularly severe when he states that today both private and public worlds, personal life as well as relations at work, are characterized by "the search for competitive advantage through emotional manipulation." [18] In analyzing the changing nature of the American character, Lasch has been the most visible critic of what he calls *The Culture of Narcissism*. [19]

14. *The Fall of Public Man* (New York, 1977).

15. See Lionel Trilling's *Sincerity and Authenticity* (Cambridge, Mass., 1972); and Nathan Adler's *The Underground Stream: New Life Styles and the Antinomian Personality* (New York, 1972).

16. See Philip Rieff's *The Triumph of the Therapeutic: Uses of Faith after Freud* (New York, 1966); and *Fellow Teachers* (New York, 1973).

17. Bell, *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism, op.cit.*, p. 144.

18. Lasch, *op.cit.*, p. 43.

19. See also Edwin Schur, *The Awareness Trap: Self-Absorption instead of Social Change* (New York, 1976); Jim Hougan, *Decadence: Radical Nostalgia, Narcissism, and Decline in the Seventies* (New York, 1975); Tom Wolfe, "The 'Me' Decade and the Third Great Awakening," *New York*, August 23, 1967, pp. 26-40; Peter Marin, "The New Narcissism," *Harper's*, October 1975, pp. 45-50, 55-56. It is important to remember that the term narcissism has come to be used so often in pejorative ways that it is suspect in terms of its usefulness in describing the current preoccupation with the self. Stuart Ewen suggests that "the preponderant idiom of *self* which characterized the latter part of the seventies" was simply one of the many "spectacles of national sensibility, as well as tirades of moral outrage against them" which "seem to rise and fall like so many other campaigns emanating from national advertisers and image makers." Yet even Ewen states that the issue of narcissism "is of some concern." See "Mass Culture, Narcissism and the Moral Economy of War," *Telos* 44 (Summer 1980), p. 77.

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In a growing body of clinical literature, the shift in symptomatology from the hysterical and obsessional neuroses to character disorders (of which the narcissistic personality is considered a prime example) has been described in increasingly negative terms. In the 1950s, Erik Erikson spoke of the problems of identity diffusion that harbored the possibility for individual transformation in a fundamentally benign society.[20] Referring to "a split of self-images," "a loss of center," and "a dispersion," Erikson described the anxious exploration of the young in the context of his theory of the life cycle which suggested the possibility of resolution in both private and public realms.[21] Observing a change in the national sensibility, Kenneth Keniston pointed to a growing number of alienated youth, many of whom in their distaste for the "military-industrial complex" became part of the counter-culture of the 1960s.[22] Despite their disillusionment with American policies at home and abroad, the youth of the 1960s generally held great hopes for individual and social transformation which in turn was reflected in the largely optimistic social criticism of the time.[23]

The retreat from the political pursuits of the 1960s to the more private concerns of the 1970s gave rise to still another perspective on the relationship between the self and society. Whereas in the 1960s a critique was advanced of the fundamental repressiveness of a post-scarcity civilization which increasingly destroyed the individual's emotionality, in the 1970s greater emphasis was placed on the shift from production to consumption in a capitalist society that encouraged the expression of impulse.[24] Moreover, social critics have continued to stress the fact that a sense of limits has been lost in American society, which is caught in an inflationary spiral as contending individuals and groups seek to improve their economic position.

Thus, according to Lasch, no longer do clinicians find the obsessive or hysterical personality traits so characteristic of an earlier stage of the capitalistic order based on work and the concomitant repression of sexuality. Rather, today, in an era of consumption that depends heavily on the demand for immediate gratification in an atmosphere of "restless, perpetually unsatisfied desire," people complain of pervasive feelings of emptiness and lack of self-esteem.[25] Kovel speaks of the way infantile impulse is no longer "suppressed by a patriarchal authority" but is "stimulated, perverted and given neither an adequate object upon which to satisfy itself nor coherent forms of control."[26] Jacoby describes the manner in which human relations, including the familial, have become rooted in the contemporary law of exchange governed by a hedonistic ethic which shuns sacrifice.[27] Coles refers to the sense of narcissistic entitlement which exists in the homes of the upper middle class and is deeply concerned about the manner in which this is spreading to other sectors of the

20. "The Problem of Ego Identity," *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 4 (1956), pp. 58-121. See also *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (New York, 1968).

21. Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis, op.cit.*, p. 212.

22. *The Uncommitted: Alienated Youth in American Society* (New York, 1965).

23. See Kenneth Keniston's *Young Radicals: Notes on Committed Youth* (New York, 1968).

24. Even David Riesman pointed this out in a later edition of *The Lonely Crowd*. He acknowledged his earlier mistaken assumption that economic problems on the side of production had been solved and suggested that serious problems have developed because "of steadily, rising expectations." *The Lonely Crowd* (New Haven, 1969), p. xviii. Daniel Yankelovich discusses the issue of Riesman's change in attitude on pp. 229-230. Further references to Yankelovich's work appear in parentheses in the text.

25. Lasch, *op.cit.*, p. xvi.

26. *A Complete Guide to Therapy* (New York, 1976), p. 252. Lasch quotes Kovel in a similar context in *The Culture of Narcissism*, p. 43.

27. *Social Amnesia: A Critique of Contemporary Psychology from Adler to Laing* (Boston, 1975), and "Narcissism and the Crisis of Capitalism," *Telos* 44 (Summer 1980), pp. 58-65.

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population.[28] And in a study designed to cut across differences in race, sex, and class, Herbert Hendin details the attempts on the part of college students to cut themselves off not only from others but from the intensity of their feelings as well. Rather than search for "identity," Hendin's youth appear to be more concerned with warding off the possibility of inner disintegration. He speaks of the "flight from identity" through the "active pursuit of disengagement, detachment, fragmentation and emotional numbness" that characterizes not only college students but young adults as well.[29] In this context, the terms "borderline syndrome" and "narcissistic personality" are increasingly used to describe pathological conditions whose social reverberations are perceived in catastrophic terms.

In *New Rules,* Yankelovich in part responds to those social critics who have dwelt very negatively on the pervasiveness of self-absorption in America. Yankelovich considers the emphasis on the self to be a necessary prelude to individual and social transformation at the center of which is the search for self-fulfillment. For him, narcissism is not the essence but the betrayal of this search. To dismiss "the self-fulfillment phenomenon as narcissistic folly" (p. 11) is to ignore the possibility that America may be undergoing nothing less than a "cultural revolution."

He speaks of the widespread search "for a new American philosophy of life" (p. xix), a sense of "shared meaning" through which experience can be comprehended. Utilizing census data, life histories and social theory, Yankelovich tries to argue that the "plates of culture" are shifting, thereby creating "deep fissures in our society" (p. 6) between those (20 percent of the population) who cling to the old ethic of self-denial and sacrifice and the "millions" who in varying ways have come to embrace the idea of self-fulfillment. He is particularly concerned with the way "inflation and other economic realities are shaping and being shaped by" the search for self-fulfillment, and "how seekers of self-fulfillment pursued a self-defeating strategy in the 1970s and how Americans in the 1980s are learning to distinguish false and destructive strategies from valid ones adaptive to a world that is just beginning to emerge" (p. xx). The "adaptive core" of those engaged in the search for self-fulfillment, he hopes, will evolve into an "ethic of commitment" that has private as well as public dimensions.

According to Yankelovich, the prime catalyst for today's "cultural revolution" was the ferment on the campuses in the 1960s which, unlike Lasch and Bell, he views quite positively. He believes that the college students of that era created an ambience which provided the majority of Americans with the opportunity to experiment with their lives. Although Yankelovich acknowledges that the search for self-fulfillment is "sprawling, messy and unfinished," he states that it has made America "freer, less fearful, less status ridden, and more diverse and tolerant than ever before" (pp. 6, 15). A vital social role has been performed by those who have been willing to confront the worst features of industrial civilization embodied in the kind of routine and meaningless work that society makes available, the sacrifices which are demanded in the process, and the shoddy material payoffs which are often begrudgingly bestowed.

Those involved in what Yankelovich calls "the strong form" of the search for self-fulfillment (17 percent of the population) have made the firmest challenge to the "old rules" embodied in the Protestant ethic. Without paying sufficient attention to the significance of recent presidential, senatorial, and congressional elections, which strongly suggest the ideological strength of conservatism, Yankelovich is convinced

28. *Privileged Ones: The Well-Off and the Rich in America* (Boston, 1977); and "Civility and Psychology," *Daedalus,* 109 (Summer 1980), pp. 133-141.

29. *The Age of Sensation: A Psychoanalytic Study of the Youth of the Seventies* (New York, 1975), pp. 16, 6.

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that we are witnessing a "mass introspective project" as well as "an outpouring of popular sentiment and experimentation" (pp. 193, 3) that reveals itself particularly in an increasing dissatisfaction with the constraints of family life, the single-minded pursuit of material well-being, and the desire for respectability. [30]

He does distinguish between "the strong formers" and the 63 percent majority "whose lives and values are conventional in most respects, but who in one or another corner of their lives have permitted the values associated with the search for personal fulfillment to take precedence over the traditional goals of worldly or familial success" (p. 151). It is the old "giving-getting compact" which is under assault: "the unwritten rules governing what we give in marriage, work, community and sacrifice for others, and what we expect in return" (p. 8). An increasing number of people have placed significant value on the importance of fulfilling themselves in marriage and career, all of which involves a greater emphasis on autonomy, choice, caring, creativity, introspection, pleasure and adventure. Older forms of authority are being challenged both within the work place where laborers are demanding more control over the kind of work that they perform and at home where the traditional family and conventional sex roles are being undermined.

Central to the quest for self-fulfillment is the elevation of the "sacred-expressive" aspects of daily life and the downgrading of impersonal and manipulative modes. Today, Yankelovich argues, people are much more inclined to value something for itself than for what it can do for them. Thus competitive success, which involves the external trappings of money and power, is often regarded as less important than self fulfillment, vaguely defined as an internal state that requires "inventing expressive styles of living" (p. 8).

Yankelovich emphasizes that what is new about this sense of the world is not so much the content of the vision as the degree to which it has taken hold. He suggests that what was once a perspective "confined to a few bold spirits" or to "a privileged class" is now the dominant set of ideas in America. Though he does indicate that the emphasis on personal fulfillment reflects the classic American themes of "self-improvement" and "faith in education" as well as "an evangelical streak of earnestness" (p. 81), he does not sufficiently discuss the historical origin of this condition. He is particularly shortsighted in his conviction that the shift in energy from the external world to inner experience is a new phenomenon to be heralded. Failing to draw upon psychoanalytic theory in which he is well-versed, [31] he never adequately responds to other social critics such as Lasch and Jacoby, who suggest that the emphasis on the self may be a desperate maneuver that, far from suggesting new modes of fulfillment, points to widespread fears of inner disintegration. Paying scant attention to romanticism in either its European or American guise, failing to discuss the impact of the "fin de siècle" phenomenon or the various avant garde movements at the beginning of the 20th century, Yankelovich is hardly thorough in his discussion of the development of either the idea of the self or the forms of individual expression that

30. It is difficult to evaluate the full significance of Yankelovich's use of polls since he never discusses in detail the kinds of procedures used to obtain information. His results raise some obvious questions. For instance, what were the psychological, political, and economic circumstances under which the polls were taken? Moreover, precisely what questions were asked? He simply presents statistics on aspects of public and private life that point to the liberalization of attitudes over the last 40 years. Then he safely concludes that although "the shifts are not uniform and stable," "there is a clear pattern of change" "toward greater tolerance, openness, choice and a wider range of acceptable behavior" (pp. 87, 88).

31. Yankelovich co-authored with William Barrett *Ego and Instinct: The Psychoanalytic View of Human Nature — Revised* (New York, 1970).

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have become popular.[32]

However, he does detail more fully the current ideas that have been utilized to provide justification for those engaged in the search for self-fulfillment. Yankelovich speaks of their "interpretive framework" which draws heavily on what he calls "self-psychology" in referring especially to the work of Maslow and Rogers.[33] The Maslovian idea of the self as a "hierarchy of inner needs," Yankelovich states, "has become part of the conventional wisdom of our time" (p. 235). The notion that we ascend through various stages that include the fulfillment of lower needs such as food and shelter before the actualization of higher needs of the spirit "is a peculiarly self-congratulatory philosophy for a materialistic age" (p. 236). Moreover, in his idea of the "self-actualized person" who "is assumed to be a creative, autonomous self, virtually independent of culture" (p. 236), Maslow ignores the way in which culture exerts an impact on all aspects of our lives, including our beliefs. Thus Carl Rogers is also criticized for advancing "the quintessentially American idea that the truly creative, autonomous and actualized person gradually evolves from one whose feelings and potentials have been 'unblocked' and is therefore able to express himself openly" (p. 236). Yankelovich believes that some suppression is necessary and therefore is additionally critical of Rogers for encouraging the release of impulse which is revealed in the daily focus on satisfying one's "needs" and "desires." In fairness to Maslow and Rogers, Yankelovich indicates that it is the popularization of their work that has been most destructive since it has provided the foundation for a set of beliefs accepted by many "whose tenets are live for the moment, regard the self as a sacred object, be more self-assertive, express all feelings, hold nothing back" (p. 235).[34]

This outlook is part of "the psychology of affluence" which was created when a large number of Americans were able to overcome the material deprivations imposed by the depression of the 1930s and the world war that followed. Beginning in the 1950s, the United States experienced tremendous economic growth that provided a bedrock for the "giving-getting compact." As Yankelovich observes: "If I worked hard, observed the rules and learned to keep my personal desires mostly suppressed, I might find myself well rewarded — with moral esteem for my self-denial, with the acceptance of others for my respectability and with worldly goods from an affluent economy" (p. 146). However, he indicates that as people began to regain confidence in the economy, they tended to view the present as well as the future differently. Several decades of affluence encouraged many Americans to believe that economic growth was a permanent condition. People then felt entitled to more of everything, an emotional

32. See John O. Lyons, *The Invention of the Self: The Hinge of Consciousness in the 18th Century* (Carbondale, Ill., 1978); Karl Joachim Weintraub, *The Value of the Individual: Self and Circumstance in Autobiography* (Chicago, 1978); Eli Zaretsky, *Capitalism, the Family and Personal Life* (New York, 1976).

33. Yankelovich's use of the term "self-psychology" to describe the work of Maslow, Rogers, and Fromm is unfortunate. This term has come to be used much more specifically to describe the work of Heinz Kohut.

34. In this context, Yankelovich fails to consider Richard Sennett's view that the emphasis upon the feeling self is fundamentally ascetic. In stating that "Narcissism is the Protestant ethic of modern times," Sennett points to the way that the worthiness of the self is called into question through secular forms of introspection that force the individual to account continually for the quality of his or her emotional life, particularly the capacity to feel intensely. See *The Fall of Public Man*, pp. 333-336. In addition, Yankelovich does not mention recent attempts of post-Freudians such as Carl Rogers to embrace a wider view of the world that acknowledges the importance of actively confronting political and economic problems. See especially *Carl Rogers on Personal Power* (New York, 1977).

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state which often fueled the belief that the self was a set of potentials to be actualized in an essentially favorable environment. Today, these attitudes are being challenged because the economic system is experiencing severe instability.

In speaking of the predicaments of the search for self-fulfillment, Yankelovich is much concerned with its underlying economic premises. Those engaged in this quest tend to presuppose "that economic well-being is a virtual citizen's right, automatically guaranteed by both government and the economy" (p. 10). Nevertheless, the increase in the price of oil which resulted from the power of the OPEC nations, the development of deficit spending to fund the welfare state, and the general decline in the competitiveness of U.S. industry have contributed to serious economic dislocation. Most Americans feel the impact of these changes in rising unemployment and inflation.

Unfortunately, at least one profile of Americans suggests that many people still believe in the idea of ever-expanding affluence. Here we see "a hopeful and inwardly focused America, aware that new opportunities for self-expression and fulfillment exist because so many new choices seem available to each of us" (p. 187). But, in fact, economic prospects have diminished. The economy is moving to restrict the choice of individuals who once had greater possibilities for shifting jobs and careers in an environment of relative abundance.

Under these conditions, a great number of those engaged in transforming their lives have become disoriented. Yankelovich speaks of another profile of the current American mood which suggests a "shift from economic optimism to gloom, from trust in institutions to mistrust, from confidence in America's future to a jumpy apprehensiveness" (p. 187). The majority of people, however, simply take note of the economic climate but assume that it is transitory. They have not yet fully accepted the idea that they will have to lower their expectations.

For the economic system to regain its stability, Yankelovich states that people will have to engage in more "realistic" thinking since the introspection of the 1970s "is no longer adaptive" to today's economic climate. He speaks of "fragmentary evidence of a growing concern with community and caring relationships" which reveals itself in his interviews when "people express a longing for connectedness, commitment and creative expression" (p. 11). The importance of having endless options which was a characteristic of the sensibility of the 1960s is now perceived to be too unsettling. People have begun not only to seek deeper, more lasting personal relationships, but to work in enduring ways to elevate the "sacred-expressive" aspects of life to a position of equal importance with the "instrumental."

Like them, Yankelovich seeks a synthesis between "traditional commitments and new forms of fulfillment to create a new direction for our society" (p. 12). For the "adaptive side" of the search for self-fulfillment to triumph, it is necessary to maintain an approach to the world that stresses the idea that "personal freedom to shape one's life can coexist with the instrumentalism of modern technological society and can civilize it" (p. 232). Here are the contours for Yankelovich's "ethic of commitment" that would involve "a renewed emphasis on the social virtues of sharing, giving, committing, sacrificing, participating and even denying one's pleasure for the moment" (p. 215). The "new ethic," which Yankelovich speaks of much too abstractly, is not a resurrection of the Calvinist's emphasis on self-denial. It is an ethic peculiarly fitted to the present age since it does not require greater affluence or an increased expenditure of resources. It can be developed if people are willing to re-evaluate their premises about the self and the social order.

Though he dwells for the most part on the attitudes of a cross-section of the

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American population and believes that in the future "changes in consciousness will be greater than changes in behavior" (p. 257), at the end of the book Yankelovich states that the "threat to our civilization comes less from individual anarchy — the individual is too hemmed in by institutions to be effectively anarchic — than from institutions that act as laws unto themselves" (p. 262). He briefly speaks of "the rot in our institutions and infrastructure" (p. 261), but believes that they "are not villains" (p. 262) and can be transformed if people are willing to engage in "self-help" and "self-governance."

His vision is conventionally pluralistic. At one point, failing to distinguish among levels of power and influence, Yankelovich lumps together all those who are selfishly seeking to better their prospects with the government. Rarely does he acknowledge the considerably greater influence of the large corporations in shaping policy in this country. Though he speaks positively of attempts to reduce the power of government and business, both of which have profited more from the "giving-getting compact" than the majority of the population, he considers the American polity to be "organized into an immense variety of interest groups" (p. 211). Our political leadership "is itself a cross-section of American life; it reflects the public psychology, it does not create it" (p. 23).[35] Ideas advanced by "egalitarian reformers" such as Christopher Jencks are essentially dismissed by Yankelovich because they do not coincide with popular belief which is less "bitterly one-sided" and holds out more hope than "a picture of a class-ridden America" (p. 138).[36] Like most of the Americans polled, he believes that the prejudicial aspects of the competitive system are diminishing, and that the "contest" is essentially open.

For Yankelovich it is the attitudes of Americans that must be transformed and not the system itself, if we are to survive creatively and comfortably. Americans will simply have to temper their thirst for more of everything and begin a process of "working through" that will have economic rather than psychoanalytic consequences. Thus inflation for him is primarily a "cultural" and "not an economic dilemma" (p. 207). The major problem is not the structure of our political economy but the collective American psyche which makes too many demands on the government. When he does speak of the government's role in inflation, Yankelovich talks about faulty leadership which is unwilling to educate the public to the necessity of the budget cuts that will be required to lower deficit spending: politicians fear that they would lose much of their constituency, given the proliferation of "entitlement programs" that serve large segments of the American public. It is interesting that Yankelovich does not speak at any length of the possibility of cutting the defense budget, our single largest expenditure. But then he is also very concerned about America's "growing political-military weakness in the world arena" (p. 214), a condition on which he never fully elaborates.

Indeed, far too many issues are raised and insufficiently explored in this book. Yankelovich is as much the victim of the prevalent mood of his time as are the social

35. For a diametrically opposed view of this issue, see the work of Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. Quentin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (New York, 1971).

36. Yankelovich does not adequately refute the work of the "egalitarian reformers" who generally agree that far too much wealth and power is still concentrated in the hands of a relatively privileged and protected minority of white men. See, for instance, the work of G. William Domhoff, particularly *The Bohemian Grove and Other Retreats; A Study in Ruling Class Cohesiveness* (New York, 1974); *The Higher Circles; The Governing Class in America* (New York, 1970); *The Powers that Be: Processes of Ruling Class Domination in America* (New York, 1979); *Who Rules America?* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1967).

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critics of the recent past whose work he criticizes. If the current state of mind in Washington does not echo his concern about the importance of the "sacred-expressive" aspects of life, certainly his emphasis on cutting back the welfare state is familiar fare. Only his critical view of certain facets of institutional life is a significant departure from the major set of proposals emanating from the corridors of power. Yet even here, Yankelovich is so vague and essentially rhetorical that most politicians could probably agree with him, given his commitment "to rebuilding the American infrastructure," to "reaccumulating capital," and to "competing more effectively with the Japanese and Germans and Koreans" (p. 264).

Like those in power, Yankelovich shares an awareness of the importance of taming the cultivation of desire. For the country to function smoothly in the future, people will have to adjust their sights and "adapt" to the realities of the time. That the aged, the poor, the handicapped, the sick and the unemployed will be the most seriously affected by cuts in entitlement programs is not an issue Yankelovich adequately addresses. Though he states that "we are becoming less sensitive to the most vulnerable citizens of our economy" because of "our narrow self-concern" (p. 5), he laments the rise of the cost of medicare legislation, which provides aid to those over 65, and suggests that significant cutbacks are necessary due to inflation. In this context, one might argue that his priorities are in need of scrutiny, especially given his concern about the importance of compassion in developing new forms of community.

Ultimately, then, Yankelovich's critique of post-Freudian thinking comes to serve his economic proposals, which are poorly conceived and can easily be used to serve those who are already rich and powerful. Like other social critics, he speaks much to apocalyptically about certain cultural changes but does not sufficiently acknowledge the conservative reaction in America to the perceived excesses of the 1960s and early 1970s. His "ethic of commitment" is his "realistic" attempt to consolidate the gains of an alleged cultural revolution but in important ways can easily provide ideological support for current mainstream political practice.

*Robert Ehrlich*

Radoslav Selucky. *Marxism, Socialism, Freedom: Toward a General Democratic Theory of Labor Managed Systems*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979.

Following Castoriadis, we can no longer talk about "socialism" and "communism."[1] But what does this mean? For Selucky, in *Marxism, Socialism, Freedom*, it means a specific project which drives to the very heart of social change. His radical content is the recognition of the underdevelopment of modern democracy, which, for him, is tied to the universalizing form of the market. The project is both admirable and contemporary. Admirable, because Selucky does not refuse to think about the future politically, i.e., make suggestions about alternative ways of organizing our lives around human control and creativity. Contemporary, because, as the title suggests, it necessitates a reassessment of our conceptions of Marxism, socialism, freedom, their inter-relations and their epistemological grounding.

Writing from the experience of the Dubcek program, the argument is predicated on

1. Cornelius Castoriadis, "Socialism and Autonomous Society," *Telos* 43 (Spring 1980), pp. 91-105.

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the illegitimacy of the Leninist-Stalinist appropriation of socialism. Given that socialism has become the neologism for the authoritarian statism of Eastern Europe, China and Cuba, Selucky insists on re-examining Marx's original views. Socialism's impasse for three decades cannot be explained by the defeats during the inter-war years, the capitalist boom after World War II, the strength of bourgeois ideology, integration or mass society, or by the impact of the Leninist-Stalinist conception of socialism. Selucky's task, then, is to "offer a general revision of Marxism which would make it possible to create, from Marx's intrinsically contradictory concept, a modern democratic theory of labor-managed systems leading to a rational, humanistic and above all realizable socialism" (p. 111). Moreover, this overturns the "myth of revolution" in favor of the reformist road to socialism in which self-management strategies in the era of corporate capitalism are to be implemented through a successful party platform. For him "a systematic reform remolding social structures does the same job as a revolution" (p. 124).

Selucky sees a basic cleavage between Marx's notions of political economy and economic emancipation. Economic emancipation entails a society organized on the basis of strategic and instrumental rationality, superiority and subordination, while political emancipation is realized through freely associated and self-managed communities based on equality: "Marx's community concept for the political sphere clashes with his nationwide factory concept for the economic sphere. Since economic base and superstructure are to be in structural accord, one is facing a dilemma: either accept...Marx's centralized...economy and...revise Marx's concept of the decentralized community-type polity or...accept...the decentralized community-type polity and...revise Marx's concept of the centralized...economy" (p. 87). To overcome this cleavage, it is necessary to adopt the "valuable liberal principles" (p. viii) of democracy and participation, and maintain the market. Selucky thus argues for a self-managed system of production and a democratically instituted politics — both joined by a market-mediated economics.

Since its separation from kinship and custom and its links to generalized commodity production, the market has been viewed as the mechanism for systems integration primarily because it universalizes human intersubjectivity through equal exchange as the sole form of reciprocity while "spontaneously" controlling the production and distribution of scarce resources. But when tied to commodity production, the inequality produced becomes social inequality by virtue of the differentiation between buyers and sellers. Given the logic of the Marxian critique of the formal equality of market relations, its abolition is the only formulation available. But while this abolishes exploitation and the concentration of wealth, it leads, according to Selucky, to the basic dilemma in Marxism: "by abolishing the market without destroying its roots, especially the social division of labor and scarcity, the social foundation of equality and freedom disappears" (p. 21).

In other words, Marx is seen as destroying the institutional core and foundation of freedom. The abolition of the market and the organization of production, distribution and consumption under the auspices of one authority (the state) is the only option open to Marx's instrumentalist notions. But neither a legal measure (e.g., nationalization) nor the concept of a nationwide factory can eliminate the distinction between concrete labor and society's needs for the functional divisions in the labor process at the structural level or the varying demands of reciprocating needs at the level of inter-subjectivity. As Feher and Heller have pointed out: "there is a crucial similarity between the reciprocity of economic anthropology and the market mechanisms of buyers and sellers: both presupposed symmetrical relations (in contrast

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to redistribution [through a central organ — the state]), and include symmetrical dual transactions.... No modern, dynamic society is possible without symmetrical economic relations: they cannot be replaced by redistribution."[2] For Selucky, this form of symmetrical reciprocity also guarantees the freedoms and rights of formally constituted democracy.

Hence, the other major concern of the book, the unrepresentative nature of the state and corporate bureaucracies which, for Selucky, undermines both an essential dialogue of civil society with the state and existing socialist ideologies coming to terms with self-management and "de-bureaucratization" as progressive programs, grows out of the critique of Marxian economies. As he points out, "it is not difficult to imagine the state run by the corporate technocracy and the state bureaucracy, each strongly devoted to their separate hierarchies and closed organizations.... The State is gradually transformed into a relatively independent machinery alienated and separated from civil society. In other words, the state is becoming what it always pretended to be" (p. 62) — it is its own goal. In this context, Marx's approach to the problem remains immanently democratic. Political emancipation already adheres to the basic liberal principles of universal suffrage, representation and participation. However, Selucky views Marx's reduction of political conflicts to class struggles as too narrow: politics extends to all conflict particularly between civil society and the state.

Since democracy can take many forms, its formal character should be its point of departure. All democratic movements have advocated separation of the state from society; constituted civic liberties, pluralism, the system of contract, representation and universal suffrage. However, the internal relation of liberty and equality poses the problems since the struggles between power groups are only substantively realized. Thus formal democracy leaves undecided the problem of the concrete structure of society. For Selucky, systemic guarantees are necessary to maintain separation and interaction with the state as well as the plurality of particular interests produced by civil society. Possible concrete expressions of participation, liberty and equality must be developed if we are to go beyond capitalist domination and statist legitimacy. In recognizing this problem his proposal for a social democratic (but still structurally homologous) alternative places the guarantees under the auspices of the universalizing nature of the market. In this way, both the negative freedom of the "absence of coercion" and the positive freedom of self-realization and determination are incorporated into a system of social production where "all associated producers acquire equal access to the social means of production as well as control over their labor and their products" (p. 131). The market, then, constitutes the main integrative force in the social system. It is the trading place of all needs which become universalized once they enter the market for exchange. Ideally, it is organized as a place for "the exchange of commodities among autonomous producers" (p. 19). More importantly, though, the market not only functionally connects private producers, but also acts as an equalizer. All are equal during the impersonal exchanges which distribute scarce consumer goods.

In light of Selucky's version of historical materialism, Leninist principles of political and economic organization come under constant criticism. Lenin's concept of the party is "a revision of Marx's political concept of socialism and its adjustment to the concept of one factory, one nation" (p. 100). Thus Kant's negative freedom and the liberal version of democracy were seen as "bourgeois ideologies" and dismissed. Lenin, in his drive for industrial development, tied it to the absolutist form of state

2. Ferenc Feher and Agnes Heller, "Forms of Equality," *Telos* 32 (Summer 1977), footnote 3, pp. 7-8.

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dictatorship. This results in a structural accord of base-superstructure realized through the authoritarianism of the party state. Lenin is seen as having traded democracy for an integrated social system wherein the organizational form of the productive forces as a factory system is taken as the model for society as a whole. The Bolshevik state no longer guarantees freedom because it is "the freedom," the embodiment of a generalized consensus. For Selucky, this anti-democratic slide in Leninism is explained within the logic of Marx's economic thought and the tension generated from the discord of the base-superstructure. The context of Russian "backwardness," for him, plays only a minor role.

However, Selucky's problems begin with his acceptance of too much traditional Marxism. While criticizing the Marx-Engels-Lenin socialist model, Selucky freezes the basic concepts of labor and productive forces, grounding them in the base-superstructure model which he otherwise criticizes the Marxists for using. In flatly accepting Marx's famous claim in the *1859 Preface to a Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy*, Selucky maintains "that the economic base and the political superstructure must not be in the long run mutually contradictory or. . . they ought to be in structural accord" (p. 75). For him, "a centralized hierarchically organized economic sub-system cannot coexist with a pluralist horizontally organized self-governed political sub-system" (p. 78). Thus, Selucky proposes a re-organization in economics and politics, but still within the binary logic of the base-superstructure model. But his solution remains formalistic in that it involves the integrating function of the market. This means that all human activities are catalogued in terms of a system of production, and that democratic procedures are seen as contingent on the economic dimension.

Selucky does not realize that the theory of the superstructure represents a shift in Marx from a political concept of class challenging the "modern" state to an economic concept of class where politics is treated as secondary to political economy. Because Selucky does not criticize the bourgeois state, it appears as an instrument of coercion of a dominant class. He misses Marx's insight that it produced universal claims more radical than the particularism inherent in class rule. Thus, Selucky sees the state as causally linked to the rise of commodity production, i.e., the market. It also arose, however, as part of the attacks on the absolutist state by classes forging the newly conceived public sphere.[3] In accepting the self-reproducing economy as the foundation of the social system, Selucky simply reproduces the traditional Marxian account. Democracy is seen solely as an economically grounded organizing principle and not treated as an organizing principle of society as a whole.

To be sure, as Selucky (and history) illustrates, centralized economic management and the control of the means of production by the state do not eliminate or illuminate conflict between social labor and social capital, or political conflicts bewteen those interested in consumption and those interested in accumulation. But more than this, decision-making throughout the whole process of determining the total reproduction of society is undertaken hierarchically. Selucky in fact understands that the problematic of social organization is *fundamentally political*: "From the functional point of view, it is irrelevant who has formal title to property; what is relevant is who disposes of it, who decides on it, who manipulates it, in whose interests one makes decisions and in whose interest controlling functions are exercised" (p. 36). But,

3. See Jean Cohen, "System and Class: The Subversion of Emancipation," *Social Research* (Winter 1978), pp. 789-843; Agnes Heller, "Past, Present and Future of Democracy," *Social Research* (Winter 1978); Jürgen Habermas, "Natural Law and Revolution," *Theory and Practice* (London, 1974), pp. 82-120.

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because of his productivistic anthropology, he is unable to grasp this insight and develop either a telling critique of Soviet-style Marxism or a democratic theory grounded in the dynamic of equality of all spheres of life.

Hence, while non-market socialism means a society organized along factory principles in which rationalist planning takes precedence over participation and self-management, Selucky is incorrect to reduce the historical development of Eastern European societies to an applied version of the Marxian theoretical system and to conflate the differing tendencies within Marx's own work to a unified reading. Engels' naturalistic evolutionism and technicist interpretation of knowledge goes unchallenged and is seen to be consistent with (rather than opposed to) Marx's anthropocentricism, centered in the concept of labor, and the anthropology of praxis. The antimonies in Marx's thought are not recognized as being more deeply structured than Selucky's own dichotomy of economy and politics. Furthermore, I would argue that the development of Marxism depended not on a homogeneous continuity but on Marx's self-misunderstanding of the metaphysics of labor and the untenable anthropological reductionism based on it. This tendency in Marx is also colored by a later reception influenced by both Taylorism and a radical voluntarism inherited from Rousseau which are articulated and institutionalized within Lenin's Bolshevism. Marx, in fact, rejected an instrumentalist reading of his project; in terms of his own philosophy of history, he regarded it as a dangerous tendency leading to new forms of alienation within a renewed despotism. This also means that the Eastern European pre-capitalist environment is seriously denuded of any meaningful impact with subsequent structural and ideological forms. While it is true that the present situation cannot be explained as a result of "original backwardness," it can be asserted that "the internalization and active reproduction of certain crucial aspects of inherited backwardness by a social structure. . . expresses itself in a specific and selective type of modernization."[4]

These criticisms are a result of Selucky's main error — his acceptance of the base-superstructure model. Not only can "the very existence of the concept... hardly be denied (but also) in the whole body of Marxism there is no single inconsistency as to the validity of the base-superstructure concept (pp. 75-77). This ensures that competing elements within Marx's formulations are explained in terms of its logically inconsistent explication. The productive forces are seen as the determinate mechanism for both the steering capacity and the evolutionary development of society. His notion of structural accord integrates the productive forces, base and superstructure into a functional unity in which conflict is seen as either an evolutionary process or a procedural aberration. It is never seen as an open-ended process of demands which may be generated beyond or outside the process of production. Selucky's formalistic attempt to locate and guarantee freedom and democracy means that they are already prefigured by the logic of the productive forces. This implies that economic life is the primary principle and source of human action, and that the market generates all mediations which make up the totality of social life. But does it? Or is the market one of many possible mediating processes which can further force open the structures of totalitarian societies and the 'gaps' which already exist in the capitalist West? By relying on an orthodox Marxism and a fundamentalist liberalism the market guarantees everything. Hence, Selucky views the superstructure as a system of purposive rationality or the form of political administration manifested either through the state which embodies domination, or

4. Johann P. Arnason, "Capitalism and Bureaucracy: Notes on Marc Rakovski's Analysis of Eastern Europe." Unpublished manuscript.

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through the community, which embodies freedom and self-management. In this sense, politics deals only with what is, it deals with "the freedom of choice in given circumstances" (p. 81). It is not conceived as encompassing normative or ideological elements which contain the potentially universalizing forms of the (abstract) freedom of humankind that overturns alienation and oppression through concrete social movements.

But economic activity alone does not constitute the basic telos of human "labor;" its domain is shared equally with culture (modes of cognition) and politics. Seen this way, society generates demands pursued through communicative, ethical and political processes which must be grounded in a philosophical anthropology that can account for the development of both material and ideational realities. Throughout the communicative paradigm of Habermas' reconstruction of historical materialism, Touraine's actionalist sociology, where social movements struggle over the material and cultural elements of society's functioning, and the critical libertarianism of Castoriadis' autonomous society, there is precisely this unifying plea and recognition.[5] Selucky's structural homology undermines one of socialism's major theses (which in my view is still defensible): that any radical social theory is not only concerned with the political mediations of economic processes but also the formation of political life itself. The market, then, cannot generate all guarantees of freedom and democratic participation in all aspects of social life, nor can it mediate all demands which spring from these processes at the level of a politically oriented inter-subjectivity. Rather, civil society or the public sphere is something more than the market. It is the possible space in which participants recognize their equality of access, their equality of participation and the right of claims to equal consideration. It is within this space of formal unity that substantial disagreements arise: it becomes the struggle for the success of competing claims. Thus, a socialist society would be one in which conflict is preserved and articulated (as Selucky realizes), but not solely on the basis of a market framework.

Selucky's project requires both redefinition and rejuvenation to enable a more radical reading of historical materialism beyond the thesis of economic determinism, to fully open the possibility of developing types of action which are theoretically informed and theories which are able to account for the complexities of modern capitalist societies. The socially instituted project of technology together with its competing strategies and designs is not bound to the functional parameters of Selucky's base-superstructure paradigm. Hence, claims for "worker control," "democracy," "freedom," are undermined when situated within a formulation that is instrumentally conceived. Beyond the "homology" of economy, the historicity of culture and accumulation both locates and generates conflicts (Touraine), the political imaginary, which constitutes the *real* activity, penetrates the rules and institutions of society (Castoriadis), asnd discourse immanently grounds the ethical demand for substantial democratic recognition (Habermas). The demand, then, for "self-management" (as the embodiment of the above claims) is a demand for a society that can displace the centrality of instrumental rationality by subjecting it to the rationality of public discourse. If the organizational changes that Selucky proposes remain no more than other forms of the management of technics; if work is socialized and pursued through "collective will formation," but not altered by this formation,

5. See Jürgen Habermas, *Communication and the Evolution of Society* (Boston, 1979), esp. pp. 95-177; Alain Touraine, *The Self-Production of Society* (Chicago, 1977); Cornelius Castoriadis, *op.cit.*, and "From Marx to Aristotle, from Aristotle to Us," *Social Research* (Winter 1975), pp. 667-738.

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then the notion of freedom, through self-managed systems, remains restricted to the criteria of supply and demand, production and distribution, excluding needs and their public articulation. Viewed from this perspective, the very notion of a "labor-managed economy leading to a ... realizable socialism" requires re-examination to rescue freedom from the semantics of a technology and, more importantly, a technocracy that moves precariously between the "dreams" of nuclear fission and silicon chips.

*John Rundell*

Stephen Bronner. *A Beggar's Tales.* New York: Pella Publishing Co., 1978. 136 pages.

Bronner's first novel, *A Beggar's Tale*, is such a discordant work, one that merits attention for many reasons. Like many modernist and avant-garde novels, *A Beggar's Tales* seems primarily to have been written for other writers and progressive critics almost *faute de mieux*; a public reared on Irving Wallace and Steven Spielberg is unlikely to be afforded access to, much less enjoy, books such as Bronner's. The substantive existential and materialist concerns of the book, following the tradition of Kafka, Pirandello, Brecht, and Camus, would seem for now at least to preclude the possibility of a mass audience in America, unless the novel should retrospectively be cast as a status symbol for Philistine acquisition or middlebrow taste should dramatically improve. And like his elder contemporaries Borges, Marques, Sartre, and Calvino, Bronner's technique — his appropriation of the *récit* form in which the reader must make the connections between the seemingly unrelated tales told by an omniscient narrator — is likely further to alienate the reader in search of casual and easy entertainment.

Formally, the first-person narrative structure of *A Beggar's Tales* compels the reader to unify a text whose "plot" consists of tales about others told by a cafe storyteller. And substantively, Bronner creatively varies the time-honored theme of the aesthetic sublimation or frustrated translation of material desires and utopian dreams into deeds which are merely symbolic. When the historical possibilities for radical social change seem to offer no outlets for the individual to act with others collectively, refuge is sought in drink and discourse. Thus the narrative structure and substantive concerns of the novel simultaneously reflect and transcend the widespread infatuation of many contemporary writers and critics with stylistic complexity, linguistic innovation, and psychological, as opposed to political, situations.

Bronner's prose is provocative; it leaps at the reader and commands attention: "No! No need for introductions! Sit down! Come. Next to me. Closer! Ah! There we are!" begins the novel. The beggar of the title, the narrator, is a self-proclaimed poet of the gutter, a man of the streets, battered, shabby and aging, a bohemian *manqué*, who has fabricated for himself and his listeners an artificial world in the dowdy cafe in which he holds forth. Since he believes there is no longer anything for him to do, he fills his time and eases his conscience telling tales of the desires, dreams and twisted deeds of others he has met. His monologue consists of solicitations and imprecations to his audience in general, and to his special listener, "My Lady" (a transvaluation of the Dark Lady theme of Shakespeare and Browning). The stories unravel a mosaic of faded hopes and persistent memories, a network of fears and fantasies molded for momentary diversion in the *demimonde* of the cafe. Through the life of the imagination and the power of invocation, the narrator fashions his surrogate

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existence, a merely verbal presence condemned to resignation but not entirely without hope. For as the narrator tells us, his stories about others afford us a semblance of communion with one another; they draw us together for the moment as listeners who by envisioning the past may be able to anticipate the future. As he declaims to those who have strayed in from the pathways of great cities: "You see, each of us has a craving for *the new,* a desire to extend one's vision. And yet, for the most part, it all remains dormant. The hope for the new continues to smoulder, but we temper it with the certainty of the present. And the reason? We have lost the ability to hope and so we can no longer even conceive of a future which is different from the present. Yes, we have been taught to accept the contours of the existent. And so, manacled to what we have been taught we are, we resign ourselves to what we will be by displacing our actions into dreams and our dreams into stories" (p. 14).

The stories related by this fabulist are of defeat and alienation, of bitterness and irony, of a number of aging men and of a little actress, who have suffered through oversensitivity and succumbed. Possibly the most interesting tale is of a little prison guard, a man with quintessentially liberal, humanitarian and pacifist sentiments, who experiences life as suffering and who chooses not to choose to fight unequivocally on the side of the oppressed prisoners whose anguish he shares. The prison guard epitomizes the humanist's dilemma and the narrator's quagmire: to choose not to act as a partisan of the oppressed, partially because of one's sensitivity to the human problems of the oppressors, is to stand alone, passive and paralyzed. And so the narrator, the prison guard, and the actress live as isolated and impotent "artists" of the street. For them, despair is deeper than fashionable pessimisms, and "liberation" at either a personal or a collective level is a vague fantasy cut off from the possibility of active realization.

For all its invocations of the torturous concerns of anguished characters, *A Beggar's Tales* is not a traditional existentialist novel. Perhaps too often, the narrator reminds us that the possibilities for change are there, that the human condition is mutable. The problem is: "Some dream without acting, others act without dreaming, and in the lives of such people the dream and the act confront one another as enemies. Cut off from action, the dream becomes a harmless optimism; cut off from the dream, the world of action becomes a nightmare. In either case, of course, the militant hope is destroyed" (p. 75). Like Benjamin, Bloch, and other writers in the progressive utopian tradition, Bronner maintains a militant hope for a better world in which essences and appearances are not sundered, and in which the dreams of the storyteller, the visions of the artist, and the speculations of the philosopher are materialized. The "living fiction" created by this beggar insulates him from "the poverty of a world without action" (p. 132l); his tales are designed to provide us with a symbolic shelter, a linguistic home in a present when hope is protected more by fantasy than by reality.

Unlike the trendy pessimisms propagated by many other contemporary American writers, where orderly facades cannot conceal underlying contradictions, *A Beggar's Tales* imposes a pessimistic superstructure upon a utopian base. As a first novel, it is not without imperfections: the writing is often theatrical (it could easily be transposed into a play); the style is sometimes a bit choppy; several of the characters also seem underdeveloped; and there are heavy-handed and rhetorical flourishes. But these flaws are more than compensated for by the themes, devices, and stories that comprise *A Beggar's Tales.*

Art can indeed appear to remedy despair if it permits the artist and the public to objectify their desires, to transform their dreams into shareable visions, and to reinforce the plausibility of our hope for a qualitatively better world. *A Beggar's Tales*

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is a symbolic act which calls into question the aesthetic significance of "here and now" or "otherworldly" fiction and revives the "underground" tradition of progressive storytelling. The next step is to fabricate deeds that transcend the order of the symbolic.

*Charles Webel*

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A number of student organizations at the Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, in collaboration with *Telos*, is sponsoring a conference on "Ecology and the Welfare State." Most *Telos* contributors on the subject as well as others will deliver papers and participate in the proceedings. For further information, contact Raymond Lau or Harry Hoffman, Sociology Department, SIU, Carbondale, Ill. 62901. Telephone: 618 459-2494.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

VICTOR ZASLAVSKY and PAUL PICCONE wrote their article while both were teaching sociology at Memorial University in Newfoundland. Now one lives in Rome, and the other in St. Louis. ANDREW ARATO teaches history and sociology at Cooper Union in New York City. HYMAN P. MINSKY is the author of the best available commentary on Keynes and teaches economics at Washington University in St. Louis. DAVID GROSS teaches history at the University of Colorado in Boulder. JOEL WHITEBOOK has just completed psychoanalytic training and will begin practicing in New York shortly. PETER PUETZ was visiting professor of German literature at Stanford University. He usually teaches at Bonn University in West Germany. JOHN FEKETE teaches English literature at Trent University in Peterborough, Ontario. ALFONS SOELLNER teaches political science at the Frei Universität in Berlin. MARY PAPKE and JULIA VISOR both teach English at Illinois State University at Normal. EILEEN MANION lives and teaches in Montreal, Canada. JOHN ZERZAN free-lances in Eugene, Oregon. TIM LUKE teaches political science at Virginia Polytechnic Institute in Blackburn, West Virginia. DONNA HARDWAY is a pseudonym for a regular *Telos* contributor not wishing to be further identified. She is still at large on the Northeastern seabord. ROBERT J. ANTONIO teaches sociology at the University of Kansas in Lawrence. ROSS GANDY is part of the People's Research Center in Cuernavaca, Mexico. ROBERT EHRLICH teaches social science at the University of California at Berkeley. JOHN RUNDELL teaches sociology at La Trobe University, Bundoora, Australia. CHARLES WEBEL is executive editor of Columbia University Press. In the last issue, Marta Petrusewicz was, in jest, identified in a way that did not please her. She has asked for, and with this receives, an apology.

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